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SAMUEL SMITH ON PSALM I.

THOMAS PIERSON ON PSALMS XXVII. LXXXIV. LXXXV. LXXXVII.

AND

WILLIAM GOUGE ON PSALM CXVI.

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# DAVID'S BLESSED MAN:

OR,

A SHORT EXPOSITION ON THE FIRST PSALM,

DIRECTING A MAN TO TRUE HAPPINESS.

BY

SAMUEL SMITH,

PREACHER OF THE WORD AT FRITTLEWELL IN ESSSEX

EDINBURGH: JAMES NICHOL.

LONDON: JAMES NISBET & CO. DUBLIN: G. HERBERT.

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M.DCCC.LXVIII.





## SAMUEL SMITH.

FOR any subject of a Memoir to bear the name of SMITH is by itself to declare a Biographer's task formidable, however willing and patient he be. To be a SMITH of a century or two back is to add perplexity to toil. To be a SMITH, and to share name and surname with numbers of contemporaries, is to turn perplexity into bewilderment. To be a SMITH, and to have an orthography alternating plain SMITH with SMITHE, and SMYTHE, and SMYTHIES, and to be mentioned as 'Mr Smith' (only) is absolutely to distract. Yet such are literally a few, and only a few, of the conditions under which I have essayed to furnish an Introduction to the present reprint of one of the many golden little volumes of SAMUEL SMITH. Passing over other elements of entanglement that have made our researches a very maze,—and which those alone who have pursued such investigations can appreciate,—there were at least NINE SAMUEL SMITHS contemporary, and every one of them a 'Preacher' of the Gospel, and in lesser or larger form a religious author. In all the usual authorities I have found our SAMUEL confounded with one or other of these contemporaries. It is therefore needful, in the outset, to distinguish each. There was, first of all, the SAMUEL SMITH, a 'gentleman's son,' and 'accurate disputant,' and 'profound philosopher' of Anthony a-Wood—whose small Latin treatise on Logic is among the rarities of the Bodleian, (Oxford) and one of those 'missing,' over which the Marsh Library (Dublin) mourns. But he died in 1620.<sup>1</sup> Then there was a SAMUEL SMITH, who was 'minister in Oliver's time in St Bennet, Grace-Church, London,' as well as a 'Preacher' in *Essex*. He was of the Two Thousand of 1662; but subsequently conformed, and ultimately became 'Ordinary' of Newgate. There are now before me Sermons by him—viz, 'Character of a Weaned Christian; or, the Evangelical Art of promoting Self-Denial,' (1675), and 'Light in Darkness,' (1680.) These dates shew—as will appear—that he was not our SAMUEL, although these 'occasionally' preached and published Sermons have much of his uncommonness of thought and quaintness of wording, if less rich and fervid in their evangelism. His folio 'Sheets,' giving 'Account of the Behaviour of the Prisoners in Newgate,' have the matter-of-fact truthfulness, touched with tenderness, of De Foe in his 'Plague.'<sup>2</sup> A third SAMUEL SMITH became Rector of Sandon—which is also in *Essex*—in succession to the profoundly-learned, but beyond all dispute,

<sup>1</sup> *Logic*: The following is the title of this very scarce book:—'Aditus ad Logicam in Usum eorum qui primo Academiam salutant,' 1613. See Wood's *Athensæ* (by Bliss), ii. 283.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, as before, iii. 698. His son, LAWRENCE SMITH, published a number of excellent books—e.g., 'Conversation in Heaven,' (1693.) 'Sacramental Devotions,' 1694.) 'Practical Discourse of the Sin against the Holy Ghost.'

to the (then) supreme authority of the nation—the Parliament—turbulently disobedient, BRIAN WALTON. But this SAMUEL, though of Essex and of the ‘Ejected,’ again was not ours, for he died in 1662. He wins from Calamy the epithet inevitable in association with RICHARD HOOKER, of ‘judicious.’<sup>1</sup> A fourth SAMUEL SMITH was another of the ‘Ejected’—from Glooston, Leicestershire. He must have been a ‘good man;’ but the details that have reached me concerning him—slender though they be—satisfy that he is distinct from the others being enumerated.<sup>2</sup> A fifth SAMUEL SMITH was one of four to whom the Cathedral of Hereford was given as a Church, and by whom many ‘ministers,’ and apparently ‘missionaries,’ were sent forth over England and Wales. He was ‘cast out’ on the Restoration in 1660, and again among the ‘Ejected’ in Berkshire in 1662. But he lived till 1685, and so was not our SAMUEL.<sup>3</sup> A sixth SAMUEL SMITH was ‘silenced’ in 1662 at St Olave’s, Southwark, London. He was assistant there with the celebrated RALPH VENNING. But he settled at Windsor, and only died in 1714.<sup>4</sup> A seventh SAMUEL SMITH was ‘curate’ of Edgeworth or (corruptly) Edgeware, to which he was ‘nominated and donated’ by Lord Coventry in 1661. But he was ‘the present curate’ in 1700, when Newcourt wrote.<sup>5</sup> An eighth SAMUEL SMITH was Vicar of Henham, in Archdeaconry of Colchester, Essex; but he too was ‘the present vicar’ in 1700.<sup>6</sup> Besides these eight SAMUEL SMITHS—bearing such strange coincidences of outward circumstance, residence, and authorship—our SAMUEL, because of his relations with Essex, is often mistaken for John Smith, the ‘Essex Dove,’ as—in the fine old quarto of his inestimable ‘Works’—he is called; and a certain Sida Smith, and another Sim Smith—both given as S. SMITH—sent me in bootless inquiry elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> It were vain to tell the tantalising number of ‘Mr SMITHS’ who provoked (disappointing) researches in all the three Counties with which our SAMUEL SMITH was known to have been connected—viz., Worcestershire, Shropshire, and Essex. SMITHS who were also ‘clerics’ are found everywhere therein; and it was vexatious to come on full accounts, and even splendid memorials, of SMITHS who were merely Smiths, and scarcely a scrap concerning those of the name who had done good service in their generation.

But now we turn to our Worthy. He was, Anthony a-Wood states, ‘a minister’s son,’ and was ‘born in Worcestershire.’<sup>8</sup> CALAMY specifies ‘Dudley,’ in Worcestershire, as ‘the place of his nativity.’<sup>9</sup> PALMER gives the year of birth ‘1588’—a mistake, as will be shewn—but is uncertain of the place, saying ‘at or near.’<sup>10</sup> Chambers, in his ‘Biographical Illustrations of Worcestershire,’ uses the same words.<sup>11</sup> So the different ‘Biographical Dictionaries,’ home and foreign. You look in vain in the ‘County’ Histories for any notice of him. You have elaborate pedigrees of a thousand and one Squire SMITHS; and most erudite discussions of the original of the name ‘Dudley’—tracing it up to one DODO, a Saxon prince—and about as valuable as like discussions on the wondrous extinct bird of the name.<sup>12</sup> But none ever seem to have dreamed—whether Historian or Biographer—of consulting the ‘Records’ of the Parish. Even CHAMBERS, in a book specially devoted to the ‘Biography’

<sup>1</sup> Davids’ *Annals of Evangelical Nonconformity in the County of Essex*, pp. 452-457; Calamy, *Account*, 313.

<sup>2</sup> Palmer’s ‘Nonconformist’s Memorial,’ ii. 387; Nichols’ *History of Leicestershire*, ii. 586.

<sup>3</sup> Calamy, *as before*, 352.

<sup>4</sup> Calamy, *Continuation*, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Newcourt’s ‘*Repertorium*,’ i. 920.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 825.

<sup>7</sup> In Newcourt, *as before*: Sida Smith is associated with John Preston, A.M., 1642, in succession to Nehemiah Rogers, as Vicar of Messing, Essex, ii. 474; for Sim Smith, i. 480.

<sup>8</sup> *As before*, iii. 657, 658.

<sup>9</sup> *As before*, *Account*, ii. 567.

<sup>10</sup> *As before*, ii. 144, 145.

<sup>11</sup> I am indebted to Sir Thomas E. Winnington Bart. for a transcript and reference to Chambers, *in loco* (page 115).

<sup>12</sup> See Notes and Queries, 1st Series, (General Index, i. to xii.,) for curious notices of persons of the name of Dodo.

of the Shire, lazily contents himself with the traditional 'at or near,' and erroneous birth-date of 1588. The 'Registers' of Dudley are fragmentary, worn, dim; but fortunately they contain those dates that have hitherto been desired rather than expected. The indefiniteness of Anthony a-Wood and the rest is changed into certainty, and the current birth-date corrected, by the first entry in the 'Registers' of the 'Parish' church of St Thomas, Dudley. Whoever made it must have been an earnest disciple of those pioneers of the Astronomer, the 'Astrologers,' else he had not imported into such a document his credulous jargon. I give the words *verbatim et literatim*—'1583 [not 1588] Samuell, sonne to Sr Will<sup>m</sup> Smithe, Clarke, Vicare of Duddly, was born on Friday morninge at 4 of the clocke, being the xxviii day of February: the signe of that day was the middle of Aquaris : the signe of the month : the plenēt of that day : plenēt of the same ower [hour] .<sup>1</sup>

The 'Sr' here means 'Sir,' which reminds us of the recentness of the Reformation in England, when 'Sir' was prefixed to the name of a 'priest' or 'parson,' as '*Rev.*' is now.<sup>2</sup> I have been baffled in all my endeavours to ascertain the family whence the father of our Samuel came. I place below notices of other 'children' from the same Register.<sup>3</sup> All of these—as well as the entry of the appointment of the paternal SMITHE as 'Vicar,' which was on '26 of March 1574 in the time of D. bulingarne, bishoppe of Worcester'—are inscribed very legibly, and illuminated in the style of early Missals, indicative either of weight and importance, or of the profound respect of the scribe. In every case the names of the SMITHS is written in a much larger hand than any others in the Church-Books, and kept distinct from all. The particular record of SAMUEL suggests memories of the story of Hannah's 'Samuel,' and (probable) like dedication of the child to that Master he was to serve so faithfully.

We know nothing of the home-training or of the school-learning of Master Samuel. It was not until much later that Dudley received its somewhat famous school, with RICHARD BAXTER for first 'Master.'<sup>4</sup> Our next date is of his being entered a 'batler' of St Mary's Hall, Oxford—the college of JOHN LOCKE—in the beginning of 1603, (1 Jac. I.) aged 15.<sup>5</sup> That he was thus entered a 'servitor,' or attendant on the wealthier undergraduates, indicates narrow paternal means,—such as placed after the lustrous name of JEREMY TAYLOR those two words that have ennobled the name ever since, 'pauper scholaris.' Nowhere is it more needful than at the University to remember 'rare Ben's' counsel:

'Boast not the titles of your ancestors,  
Brave youths! they're their possessions, none of yours.  
When your own virtues equall'd have their names,  
'Twill be but fair to lean upon their fames,  
For they are strong supporters; but till then  
The greatest are but growing gentlemen.'

This is the solitary College memorial—his entrance as 'batler'—which the industry of Wood has

<sup>1</sup> I have to return my best thanks to Mr Warrington, solicitor, Dudley, for his persistent painstaking in the matter of the St Thomas, Dudley, 'Registers,' and to Rev. T. W. Davids of Colchester for kindly putting me in communication with him. By the way, it may be remarked that there seems to have been a kind of fatality in blundering over the scanty details of Smith's life. Thus even Calamy speaks of Dudley as in Essex, and Mr Davids (as before) as in Warwickshire.

<sup>2</sup> 'Notes and Queries,' as before, gives examples and illustrations.

<sup>3</sup> These are as follows:—'Sara, daughter to Sr William Smithe, Clarke, Vicare of Dudley, was baptizede the xxv<sup>th</sup> of July 1581: 'Mary, dawter to Sr William Smithe, Clarke, Vicare of Dudley, Baptized January, last day.' No record is preserved of the marriage of the Vicar, nor of his wife. The Vicar himself must have died in or before 1610, as a 'Henry Jackson,' in 1610, is entered as 'Vicair of Duddley.'

<sup>4</sup> 'Reliquie,' as before, i. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Wood, as before, iii. pp. 657, 658.

recovered: and I have failed, after no perfunctory effort, to add to it.<sup>1</sup> He appears to have left the University without taking a degree: perchance the death of his father, not later than 1609-10, hindered. Though JOHN DAVENPORT, B.D., had a well-to-do father, he had to postpone his degrees from—as it would seem—temporary pecuniary difficulties.<sup>2</sup> It may have been thus with him. The Church-income of the Vicar of Dudley was at no time very great.

By 1613-1614 at latest SAMUEL SMITH was in 'holy orders': in all likelihood some years prior, for by 1614 he had reached his 31st year. Be this as it may, on the title-page of the first edition of 'David's Blessed Man,'—herein reprinted,—he is designated—albeit it has escaped the notice of all the authorities—'Minister of ROXWELL in Essex,'—a name dear to all who hold in loving regard the memory of RICHARD YOUNGE, the wise, genial, chatty, original, loveable '*Florilegus*,' all whose little books are as 'fine gold of Ophir.'<sup>3</sup> He cannot have remained long in Roxwell,<sup>4</sup> for in November of 1615—the very month and year wherein RICHARD BAXTER was born, afterwards destined to be his friend and eulogist<sup>5</sup>—he was admitted Vicar of Prittlewell, also in Essex. The following is from the Register:—

'Sam. Smith, *cler.* admiss. ad vic. de Prittlewell, com. Essex, 30 Nov. 1615 ad pres. Rob. dom. Rich.'<sup>6</sup>

Lord Rich, of the noble House of Warwick, was the friend by pre-eminence of the Puritans. His name occurs in many old 'Epistles Dedicatory' with words of deepest esteem, and praise too grave and scriptural to be suspected of flattery. Perhaps the 'presentation' by this nobleman may be interpreted as indicating the Puritan character of both father and son. Every page of SAMUEL SMITH's books shews him to have been of the antique cast of Puritan.

Prittlewell, over whose 'parish' Church our Worthy was thus installed Vicar, was formerly 'appropriated' to the Priory of the same name, and in the gift of that Priory and Convent till their suppression: after which Henry VIII. granted the whole to Sir Thomas Audley, by whose brother it was alienated to Richard Lord Rich, (5 Edw. VI.) Hence Lord Rich's presentation to it of SAMUEL SMITH. Newcourt and the 'county' Histories give many antiquarian details of the Priory and Parish altogether.<sup>7</sup> One *bit* of historic fact relating to Milton or Middleton, which is within the Parish of

<sup>1</sup> I have very heartily to thank Mr T. A. Eaglesim, B.A. of Worcester College, Oxford, for most ungrudging help toward recovering further memorials of Smith in Oxford. The 'Bodleian' has a number of his rarer books.

<sup>2</sup> The Calendar of State Papers by Mrs Green: Domestic Series, 1623-25, page 355. This invaluable 'Calendar' and the whole series guide to the manuscript treasures of the Public Record Office. No one can afford to neglect them. The Letters of DAVENPORT calendared are of much interest.

<sup>3</sup> He is sometimes (mistakenly) called Robert Younge: in the 'Prevention of Poverty,' (1655,) he has given his surname, 'Rich. Young.' On the former abundance of the surname 'Richard,' see my foot-note in Memoir of RICHARD STOCK, prefixed to his 'Malachi,' in this series of Commentaries.

<sup>4</sup> There is no doubt that the Samuel Smith of Roxwell is identical with our Samuel, inasmuch as in the after-editions of 'David's Blessed Man' he designates himself of Prittlewell. Roxwell, in 1614 and long subsequently, was a chapelry annexed to the Vicarage of Writtle, the Vicar appointing a curate for its supply. Writtle is a *peculiar* of New College, Oxford. The Vicar in 1614 was Matthew Davies, B.D., fellow of New College, and brother of Sir John Davies, the well-known poet. Doubtless our Smith was 'curate' of Roxwell by appointment of Davies. I am indebted to Rev. T. W. Davids, as before, for most of these details, and which were furnished to him by the present Warden of New College—Rev. Dr Sewell.

<sup>5</sup> Born at Rowton, Shropshire, 12th Nov. 1615: 'Reliquie,' i. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Wood, *as before*, supplemented by Bliss from Reg. Baneroff—Kennet.

<sup>7</sup> Newcourt, *as before*, i. pp. 472-474.

Prittlewell, is of undying interest—namely, that it was on ‘Milton shore’ JOHN FRITH, the friend and associate of WILLIAM TYNDALE, was ‘taken’ when he had fled thither in the vain hope of escaping to the Continent. All know he was ‘burnt’ at Smithfield—dying heroically, yet very meekly.<sup>1</sup> There are memories here also of the Bretteridges and Purchases and Rogerses and Lawrences, that are tenderly cherished in New England. The ‘May-Flower’ sailed while our Samuel was Vicar of Prittlewell (1620).

We have seen that while ‘curate’ of Roxwell ‘David’s Blessed Man’ was published. So far as I have been able to trace, this seems to have been his first book, one of those afterwards referred to as belonging to his ‘Spring-time,’ as contrasted with his later, which he calls his ‘Autumn-time.’<sup>2</sup> He was in a manner ‘constrained’ to authorship: for from some of his after ‘Epistles’ we gather that he had no little enforced leisure from sickness,—*e.g.*, in the ‘Epistle’ to the ‘Christian Reader,’ prefixed to his ‘Christ’s Preparation to His owne Death,’ so early as 1619–1620, he says, ‘When I first began to lay pen to paper to write these Lectures following, I intended the prosecution of the whole story of Christ’s Agony, Apprehension, Arraignment, Condemnation, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, as they follow in the story of the Ghospell [*sic.*] But have many waies bin hindred in the worke, principally by sicknesse: wherein, *for late yeares* I have been much exercised. And now, not knowing whether life and health will permit mee to finish the whole, I thought good to suffer these few Lectures to come to light.’ Similarly in his ‘Great Assize’ he writes: and as he at the same time expresses his conception of the office of a minister of the gospel, I cull a brief extract. ‘Seeing,’ he says, ‘the burden of the ministry is this, to pluck men out of the kingdom of Satan and to bring them to the living God, surely then it is the duty of all those that have taken upon them this holy calling, to help forward this worthy work. And to this end I entertained my spare hours *in the time of my long sickness*, when I was not able to perform my duty in the congregation of my charge, in publishing this short exposition of the 51st Psalm.’ In the former ‘Epistle’ he acknowledges very gratefully the kind reception given to preceding publications: ‘I heartily confesse, not without my thankfulness to God, that my poore labours in this kinde have hitherto found such a gracious acceptation with the Church of God, above all expectation or desert: as I have no small encouragement still, to spend some few houres, at some time in this kinde: rejoycing if by any meanes it may doe good in God’s Church.’ In the latter he says more specifically, ‘I present here unto thy view the *fourth* public fruit of my ministry, wherein I have endeavoured that those especially

<sup>1</sup> Davids’ ‘Annals,’ *as before*. He has very kindly favoured me with certain additions which I would here give, as every little helps in such permanently important historical matters. Milton or Middleton (as above) belonged to the peculiar of the Deanery of Bocking. Newcourt says he finds no Dean of Bocking for a hundred years after 1454. But Wolcott (Life of Wykeham, p. 393) gives Thomas Bedyll or Bedell as Dean in 1533. Bedell (Wood, *as before*, *s. n.*) was much employed by Cromwell. He was also one of those who took part in the consecration of Cranmer.—[See of him Strype, Cranmer: Eccl. Mem. i. 299, 402.]—Though Archdeacon of Cleveland, June—August 1553, he might possibly have been Dean of Bocking at the date of Frith’s apprehension. If so, we can understand how it was Frith fled thither. It is worth while working out this vein of Reformation History.

<sup>2</sup> The words occur in his ‘Epistle’ to the Reader prefixed to ‘Moses, his Prayer.’ He acknowledges the kind acceptation of his former publications, whereby he is emboldened to publish this: those published in Spring-time of his ministry, this the fruit of its Autumn should be more ripe, for ‘the Lord having lengthened out my pilgrimage that I have passed the first age of man, which Moses saith, according to the ordinary course of nature, is three score years and ten; and I have now for some years entered upon that other age . . . [which] is but labour and sorrow.’ Onward a little he calls Baxter his ‘learned friend.’ This was in 1656. More of it again.

of mine own hearers—those religious people and inhabitants of Prittlewell in Essex, whom I love with my heart—might a second time take notice of these my exercises that in public I delivered unto them.' It is difficult to find one's way through the manifold editions—reckoned not by one or two, but by scores, *literally*—but the three books that preceded 'The Great Assize' seem to have been (a) 'David's Blessed Man' (1614)—(b) 'Exposition' of Hosea, chap. vi. (1617)—(c) 'Joseph and his Mistressse, the Faithfulnessse of the one, and the Unfaithfulnessse of the other' (1619.) 1620 was an unusually prolific year of publication, as our List of all his Writings at close of this little Memoir evinces. This is to be explained by returning health and vigour, and widening popularity. Each book that he issued was eagerly welcomed: in every 'Epistle' he has to make the same adoring acknowledgment of having been used to do good. He fulfilled his purpose of preaching and publishing on other portions of the Great Life, more particularly in his 'Admirable (= 'Wonderful') Convert; or, the Miraculous Conversion of the Thiefe on the Crosse, with the fuall impeniteny of the other' (1632.) Earlier in his 'Chiefe Shepheard; or, an Exposition upon y<sup>e</sup> xxiii. Psalm' (1625.) Another short quotation from its 'Epistles' elucidates several points:—Presenting it 'to Mr Edward Seabrid, Esq., and his wife,' he says, 'May it find acceptation in the Church of God, as *other my poore labours and endeavours in the same kinde have done.*' And again, 'to the Reader'—'Having of late handled in my pastoral charge this short psalm of the prophet David, and meeting with many things of singular use for the times wherein we live, and *having heretofore received no small encouragement* in my publications of some of my meditations on *some other of the Psalms*, I resolved of some spare houres to revise the same again.' Here we learn that his preaching was very much expository, and that previous to the 'Chiefe Shepheard' he had preached and published 'in the same kinde:' and so we are guided to his 'David's Blessed Man,' which is now reprinted, and his 'David's Repentance,' already referred to—the one consisting of an 'Exposition' of the 1st, and the other of the 51st Psalm, to which was added later 'Moses, his Prayer; or, An Exposition of the xc. Psalm' (1656.) Taking these successive books as specimens of the 'preaching' to which the parishioners of Roxwell and Prittlewell listened from Sunday to Sunday it is very plain that they were 'fed' with 'the finest of the wheat:' or (to change the metaphor) if the Well which gave its name to the hamlet sprang clear and freshly in its bosky nook—

'A pleasant walk, when singing bird  
Upon the bending twig is heard,  
And rustling leaf that bids you hush!  
And hear the slow, still waters gush  
Far down below unseen  
Beneath the branches green'<sup>1</sup>—

certainly the good Vicar gave them from day to day full cups of the very 'water of life.' It will be seen that in the 'Epistle' to 'Sir Robert Rich, Kt.,' the 'sonne and heire' to his patron 'Robert, Lord Rich,' prefixed to 'David's Blessed Man,' he states the main design and end of his preaching and writing: 'In preaching I have ever courted plainnesse, the best eloquence, and the carriage of matters, so that those of the lowest forme may learne somewhat the soundest and the surest learning.' Privately he must have held very genial relations with 'high and low' in his parish. Long after he had left he writes softly and lovingly of them. To one, 'Mary, widow of Maister John Lawson

<sup>1</sup> The Bishop's Walk, p. 9.

of Milton, Prittlewell,' in dedicating his 'Christian's Taske,' preached at her husband's funeral, he says, 'Ingratitude in the Scripture is a thing much condemned, and odious in the sight of God. I desire therefore, in some poore measure, to shewe my thankfulnesse to my wel-deserving friends, amongst whom if I should not number you, I should much forget my selfe, your house having beene as the house of Onesiphorus to me *and mine*.' The last two words 'and mine' would seem to intimate marriage: but there is no record whatever of such an event. Perhaps, as his father had died in 1610, he removed his mother and his sisters, Sarah and Mary, to his own Vicarage.

It is uncertain how long SAMUEL SMITH remained in Prittlewell. Newcourt places one 'John Negus' after him, but gives no date. Then follows 'Thomas Peeke, cl. 2 Maii 1633, per mort. Negus.' So that he must have left before 1633.<sup>1</sup> In 1632, on the title-page of his 'Admirable Convert,' he is designated simply 'Minister of the Word of God,' not as hitherto 'at Prittlewell in Essex.' What were the circumstances under which he parted from his devoted Flock in Prittlewell it is impossible now to tell. It must surely have been with a pang he sundered a tie of seventeen years' continuance. Wood, to his notice of our Worthy's being 'beneficed at Prittlewell,' adds, 'and afterwards, about the beginning of King Charles I., in his own county.'<sup>2</sup> Charles succeeded his father James in 1625; and therefore unless 'about' was used in the Athenæ with considerable latitude, in this instance the usually accurate though atrabilious Chronicler, is inaccurate.<sup>3</sup> Moreover there is no confirmation, no trace whatever of his having held a 'living' in his 'own county' of Worcestershire. Later—as we shall find—he is described as of 'Kinver,' which is in this County: and probably Wood mistook his dates. He proceeds, 'Where [*i.e.*, in his own county] continuing till the Rebellion began in 1642; [he] did then or the year following retire to London for shelter, sided with the Presbyterians, and became a frequent preacher among them.'<sup>4</sup> Afterwards he returned to his cure, had another conferred on him in Shropshire, viz., 'Cound.' With Cound was then combined Cressage, or Cressedge, one of the most ancient and historically interesting of English churches—as Eyton in his admirable and authoritative 'Shropshire' abundantly proves, albeit with an antiquarianism, somewhat overdone—he has not a word to tell of person or event younger than a couple of hundred years before Smith, and so nothing of him. The Registers of Cound and of Cressage alike have been searched in vain for notices of SAMUEL SMITH. As in other cases, some Royalist successor or other Vandal appears to have eliminated every trace of him. That he was 'Perpetual Curate' or 'Vicar' of the combined parishes is indisputable. He signs the adherence of the 'Ministers' of 'Shropshire' to the 'Testimony' of the 'London Ministers' in 1648—as 'Pastor of Cound.' This Bliss confirms from a MS. note by Wood in Ashmole.<sup>5</sup> The Shropshire 'Testimony' is itself in my collection; and I can attest the fact. Again, CALAMY in his 'Account' places him among the 'Ejected,' as having been so ejected from 'Cound and Cressedge.'<sup>6</sup> Further, RICHARD BAXTER in his 'Reliquiæ,' in a

<sup>1</sup> Newcourt, *as before*, ii. p. 474. On Peck see Davids, *as before*, pp. 268, 318, 445, 569. His father is one of the 'Worthies' of New England.

<sup>2</sup> *As before*, iii. pp. 657, 658.

<sup>3</sup> This does not appear. The fact that the successor of his successor was admitted in 1633, is not inconsistent with the statement that his incumbency ceased about 1625.—ED.

<sup>4</sup> That our Worthy did flee to London, as Wood states, is certain: for in his 'Epistle Dedicatory' of 'Moses, his Prayer' to Samuel Freborne, he gratefully refers to his great kindness and generosity in his own and other ministers' behalf, 'when it was not my case alone, but the condition of many hundreds of the ministry in this nation to fly to London, as that city of refuge to which they fled when it was not safe for them to live at their pastoral charges.'

<sup>5</sup> Wood, *as before*, iii. pp. 657, 658.

<sup>6</sup> SAMUEL SMITH, like most of his contemporaries, came into conflict with the Quakers. In the 'Abstract of the Sufferings

very valuable notice of Smith—of which anon—describes him as ‘sometime of Prittlewell in Essex, but then of Cressage in Shropshire.’<sup>1</sup> Once more, it was as being a ‘minister’ in the county of Shropshire, that he was appointed—as from Wood and elsewhere we know he was—‘one of the commissioners for the ejection of scandalous and ignorant ministers and schoolmasters.’<sup>2</sup> It is very grievous that we have no memorials of this Shropshire ministry and public service, and annoying that the Booksellers continued to republish his books with either the old designation ‘of Prittlewell’ or simply as author of such and such. Thus the edition of ‘David’s Blessed Man,’ from whence our reprint is taken, though dated ‘1635’—when he had certainly left Prittlewell—still describes him as of it, and so the 12th edition of ‘David’s Repentance’ in 1642: and his ‘Moses, his Prayer’ (1656) and ‘Looking-glass for Saints and Sinners’ (1663) have ‘Samuel Smith, Minister of the Gospel, and Author of David’s Repentance and the Great Assize,’ &c. In the 14th edition of the ‘Great Assize’ in 1649, we read, ‘Samuel Smith, Minister of the Word, and yet living.’

The details now gleaned and gathered—culminating in the Ejection of 1662—inform us that in the national throes on the Birth of Liberty, SAMUEL SMITH elected to side for the Kingdom rather than the King, for the Parliament and Law as against Charles and Laud and Prerogative. It is to be regretted that the utmost research has yielded no record of his abundant and ‘popular’ preaching in London, or of his part in ‘siding’ with the Presbyterians. Among the mass of contemporary tracts you do not come on his signature to any of the intolerant *ukases* (so to say) of the dominant Sect, whether earlier of the Presbyterians, or a little later of the Independents. You do not find him in any way accused in the virulent polemics of JOHN GOODWIN and his ‘many adversaries.’ You do not either find Edwards of the notorious ‘Gangrena,’ or the scarcely less notorious PRYNNE, claiming him as an ally. The whole tone and ‘savour’ of his writings, the entire *character* of the man as impressed unconsciously on his books, brings before us a gentle, shy, retiring, meditative soul, to whom the ‘sturt and strife’ of the age would be dissonant, one who could not but be serenely obedient to conscience, but quietly, undemonstratively: one to be compassionated as the poet has another—

of the People called Quakers,’ [vol. i. 1650-1660,] a work in 3 volumes, (8vo) compiled by Joseph Besse, though it does not bear his name, he is called ‘priest of the Parish’ and of ‘the steeple-house of Cressedge.’ This was in 1656. The disturbance described, according to Besse, must have been an unseemly one; but it is to be remembered that the account is with emphasis *ex parte*, and that in the outset Quakerism was not the meek thing it became later. The matter is only valuable biographically as attesting that S. S. was the ‘parson’ of Cressedge.

<sup>1</sup> As before, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, as in last reference to Athene. I have to thank the present Rector of Cound (Rev. Augustus T. Pelham, M.A.) for his earnest endeavours to aid me, and for repeated examinations of the Registers. He found no mention of the officiating ministers between 1615 and 1662 in connexion with baptisms, burials, or marriages; neither in the church-accounts. In 1652 Mr James Cressett is called ‘minister at Cound;’ he has a son born named Edward. In 1654 another son, James, is baptized, when Mr James Cressett is again called ‘minister at Cound.’ The Register is very neatly kept to April 1657; after which, till 1662, careless and bad writing. As in the ‘Sufferings of the Quakers’ Smith is called ‘priest’ of ‘Cressedge,’ but *not* of Cound, it is possible that he may have given up the latter to this Cressett. But he [Cressett] must have left Cound for some reason or other, or been ‘deprived.’ For in the memorable year of 1662 we have these ‘entries’ concerning him—‘1662. Mr James Cressett, Rector of Cound, did publicly in the time of divine service read the 39 Articles of the Church of England,’ &c. ‘The 17th day of August 1662. Mr James Cressett, Rector of Cound, the same Lord’s day in time of divine service, did publicly read the declaration in the Act of Uniformity expressed touching the unlawfulness of the Covenant, after the reading of his Certificate of his subscription to the aforesaid declaration, and did the same day solemnly and publicly read the morning and evening prayer appointed to be read by the said Act, and did declare his unfeigned assent and consent therunto, and to everything therein contained. In the presence and hearing of Robert Cressett, Edward Dod, Rd. Langley,’ &c.



‘ Beautiful spirit ! fallen, alas !  
 On times when little beauty was ;  
 Still seeking peace amid the strife,  
 Still working, weary of thy life,  
 Toiling in holy love,  
 Panting for heaven above.’<sup>1</sup>

In accord with all this it is what we would look for to learn that, while he may have preached, like the most of the illustrious Two Thousand, a ‘ Farewell Sermon,’ he did not publish it, but bore his cross meekly, and retreated to his native Dudley—where he remained until he died. It was during his closing residence here that he so won the love of RICHARD BAXTER. At this point I would bring together his tender and winsome notices of our Worthy and his birth-place. First of all of the latter: ‘ At that time’ [about 23d year] ‘ old Mr Richard Foley of Stourbridge, in Worcestershire, had recovered some alienated lands at Dudley, which had been left to charitable uses, and added something of his own, and built a convenient new school-house, and was to choose his first school-master and usher. By the means of James Berry—who lived in the house with me and had lived with him—he desired me to accept it. I thought it not an inconvenient condition for my entrance, because I might also preach up and down in places that were most ignorant, before I presumed to take a pastoral charge—to which I had no inclination. So to Dudley I went, and Mr Foley and James Berry going with me to Worcester, at the time of ordination. I was ordained by the bishop, and had a licence to teach school: for which, being examined, I subscribed. Being settled, with an usher, in the new school at Dudley, and living in the house of Mr Richard Foley, junr., I there preached my first publick sermon in the upper Parish Church.’<sup>2</sup> Renown surely worth cherishing by now busy and prosperous Dudley—that in it was born and died SAMUEL SMITH, and that in it the author of ‘ The Saint’s Everlasting Rest’ preached his ‘ first Sermon.’ The folios of Nash’s ‘ Worcestershire’ over-pass both facts: but they outweigh in interest the multitudinous ‘ chronicles’ of so-called greater events. Again, in giving an account of his unthinking ‘ Conformity’ in the outset, BAXTER thus ingenuously tells us the process and result together, introducing our Worthy: ‘ About twenty years of age I became acquainted with Mr Simmonds [Symonds?], Mr Cradock, and other very zealous, godly Nonconformists in Shrewsbury and the adjoining parts, whose fervent prayers, and savoury conference, and holy lives did profit me much. And when I understood that they were people prosecuted by the Bishops, I found much prejudice arose in my heart against those that persecuted them, and thought those that silenced and troubled such men could not be the genuine followers of the Lord of Love.’ . . . ‘ Withal the books of the Nonconformists were then so scarce and hard to be got, because of the danger, that I could not come to know their reasons. Whereas, on the contrary side, Mr Garbet and Mr Samuel Smith did send me Downham, Sprint, Dr Burges, and others of the strongest that had wrote against the Nonconformists.’<sup>3</sup> This sending of books by our SMITH to strengthen BAXTER in his Conformity, is one of many incidental proofs that turn up that the Nonconformists of the Ejection were made so by ‘ constraint, not willingly,’ that

<sup>1</sup> The Bishop’s Walk, *as before*, page 16.

<sup>2</sup> ‘ Reliquie,’ *as before*, i. 9. Mr Stoughton has given some touching extracts from the unpublished Baxter MSS. relating to Dudley. See his ‘ Ecclesiastical History of England from the opening of the Long Parliament to the death of Cromwell,’ ii. 191.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 9, 12, &c.

they loved the Church of England, though they loved the truth too well to sacrifice it to an impossible Uniformity. We have still another and finely touched notice in the 'Reliquie':—'At that time also [as before] God was pleased much to comfort and settle me by the acquaintance of some reverend peaceable divines: Mr Garbet (aforesaid) and Mr George Baxter of Little Wenlock—(very holy men and peaceable, who laboured faithfully with little success till they were above four score years of age a piece:)—especially old Mr Samuel Smith, sometime of Prittlewell in Essex, but then of Cressage in Shropshire.' . . . 'This good man was one of my most familiar friends, in whose converse I took very much delight.'<sup>1</sup>

When the 'ejected' Vicar of Cound and Cressage retired to his native place, he was in his 79th year. What a fine sight to one's imagination is this white-headed old man giving up his all of worldly 'living' in fealty to conscience! Would that we had his portrait in its setting of silver hair reverently to study! How he was engaged after his 'Ejection,' it is idle to conjecture. We may be sure of this, that he laid not down his 'office' of a 'Preacher' of the Gospel. To that, holier, than prelate hands had consecrated him: and whether in settled 'congregation' or as an 'occasional' helper of 'the brethren,' he doubtless continued 'faithful' even 'unto the end.' One other glimpse have we of him in association with RICHARD BAXTER—but, alas! Kinver, which is in Worcestershire, retains no 'memorial' at this late day—'October 19th 1652 was a thanksgiving day kept at Tresle upon the settlement of a ministry there: and at Womborne, upon the desire of the inhabitants of Tresle, Mr Richard Baxter of Kidderminster, and Mr Samuel Smith of Kinver, prayed and preached.'<sup>2</sup>

In the year after the 'Ejection,' viz., in 1663, was published his last book, 'A Looking-Glass for Saints and Sinners; or, an Exposition on the Second Epistle of Saint John.' It bears on the title-page to be 'a most needfull treatise for these apostatising times wherein we live,' and perchance is over-vehement in its rebukes of Papists and Quakers: but otherwise has many memorable things in it, and altogether is an extraordinary effort for one so aged. Prefixed to it is a 'copy' of Verses—as the phrase runs—addressed to the venerable author by a brother minister, 'John Taylor of Dudley,' concerning whom I can gain nothing. Intrinsically they are of no great value, but as bringing the 'old man eloquent' before us as he looked to one who knew and loved him, they cannot be withholden:—

'To my reverend friend, the Author.

Sir,

'If books—the issues of the mind—like children be  
To shew the parent to Posterity,  
Then you—though childless otherwise—shall live and shew,  
Fruitful in children, pretions to the view  
Of all succeeding ages; and the holy men  
That know the worth and price of things divine,  
Shall love and praise the reverend Author and his pen,  
That holy Text and Truth thus make to shine.

<sup>1</sup> 'Reliquie,' i., 9, 13, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Shaw's 'Staffordshire,' ii. pp. 216\*, 217\*. A number of Smiths or Smyths—one Edward Smith, Registrar of Womborne, (1653,) and in 1701, another Edward, Rector of a London Church are here mentioned.

You have been plentiful and painful in your works,  
 A powerful Preacher and a Writer both;  
 Discovering sin: ah! sin, which in man's nature lurks,  
 A pattern to us for avoiding sloth.  
 For when your age—now great—might challenge quiet ease  
 From toilsome studies, lo! here comes to sight,  
 A pretious piece, a work, a book that well will please  
 The godly, as a babe of sweet delight.  
 Thus we may see how grace weak nature doth excell:  
 The latter fades and with old age decays,  
 The other fertile grows; for still your years can tell,  
 How to unfold God's will and teach His wayes.  
 Go on, dear Sir, thus to make plain God's word and mind,  
 Whilst we enjoy you on the earth below;  
 Thereby you comfort now, and more shall after find,  
 When dying, you eternal joys shall know.

So prays your very friend and neighbour,

JOHN TAYLOR, Minister of the Gospel in Dudley.'

'He was living,' says Wood, 'an aged man, near Dudley in Worcestershire, in 1663.'<sup>1</sup> Calamy having summarily characterised him as 'a very holy, judicious man, and greatly esteemed,' adds in the 'Continuation'—'I am informed he spent his last years in Dudley, in Worcestershire, (which was the place of his nativity,) and there died very old in 1664, and was buried at the end of the chancel, as his grave-stone witnesses.'<sup>2</sup> Baxter in the 'Reliquie,' notes, '[he] was buried but this winter 1664, at his native place at Dudley, in Worcestershire.'<sup>3</sup> It was with peculiar pleasure I found there was an 'entry' in the St Thomas, Dudley 'Registers' of the 'end:' all the more that the 'grave-stone,' which was extant when Calamy wrote (1727), has long disappeared. It is as follows:—

'Old Mr Samuel Smithe, buried 17th March 1665.'

Well might he be called 'old,' and even 'very old,' for, born in 1583, (*not* 1588 as hitherto erroneously stated,) he was in 1665 in his 82d year, and so went to his grave beside his Vicar-father 'in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season,' (Job v. 26,)—

'A genuine Priest,  
 The Shepherd of his flock; or, as a King  
 Is styled when most affectionately praised,  
 The father of his people. Such is he;  
 And rich and poor, and young and old, rejoice  
 Under his spiritual sway.'—[WORDSWORTH.]

I have now to submit a List of the Writings of SAMUEL SMITH, taken—with two exceptions noted—from the books themselves, and much more full and exact than hitherto. From the more rare—and they are very rare—I take brief extracts, the others being readily met with I simply describe.<sup>4</sup>

I. David's Blessed Man; or, a Short Exposition upon the first Psalm, directing a man to true

<sup>1</sup> As before, Athens, iii. pp. 657, 658.

<sup>2</sup> As before in last reference to him.

<sup>3</sup> As before.

<sup>4</sup> I beg to acknowledge the obliging attention of the officials of the British Museum Library, Sion College, and Williams, London; Bodleian, Oxford, and Trinity College, Dublin.

happinesse. Wherein the Estate and Condition of all Mankinde is lay'd downe, both for this life and that which is to come. The ninth edition, profitably amplified by the Author, Samuel Smith [as before in all save No. 8.] London: [as in No. 7.] 1635. [18mo.]

\* \* I have not been able to see the first edition (1614): the 15th appeared in 1685. See the 'petitions' for the Royal Family, with names given in the appended prayers. There are changes in successive editions.

II. Exposition of Hosea, c. vi. 1617. [4to.]

\* \* See note at end of this List.

III. Joseph and Mistresse: the Faithfulness of the one and the Unfaithfulness of the other; laid downe in five Sermons upon the thirtie-nine chapter of Genesis, the seventh, eighth, and ninth verses, &c. By Samuel Smith, Minister of God's Word at Prittlewell, in Essex. Heb. xiii. 4, Marriage is honourable, &c. London: Printed by G. Purslowe for John Budge; and are to be sold at his shop in Paul's Churehyard, at the signe of the Greene Dragon. 1619. [18mo.] Title-page. To the Reader, pp. 6. Table, pp. 5. Treatise, pp. 305.

\* \* In speaking of the licentiousness of his age in this powerful treatise, there are some vivid sketches of manners, and severe 'rebukes' of the 'women.' The following is a characteristic example of his style:—'In these days and times iniquity doth so abound, that women's veil of modesty is for the most part out of use; and instead thereof, they set out themselves by all means they may, by frizzling their hair, starchings, smoothings and ruffs so deep that their heads must stand like an apple in a charger in the midst of them, more liker flirt-like women than sober matrons. Let, then, all godly and sober-minded women learn to keep on their veils, I mean to be watchful over their eyes and other senses.'

IV. The Great Assize, or Day of Jubilee, in which we must make a generall account of all our actions before Almighty God. Delivered in four Sermons, upon the 20 chapter of the Revelation, plainly shewing the happy estate of the godly, and the woful condition of the wicked. Where-to are annexed Two Sermons upon the first chapter of the Canticles, vv. 6, 7. By the Author, Samuel Smith, Minister of the Word, and yet living. The 14th impression. London. 1649. [18mo.]

\* \* I have not seen the first edition; but as it was his 4th publication [See Memoir, *ante*,] it must have been issued in 1618-19 or 1619-20. The 'Two Sermons' annexed were extremely popular, and formed a separate volume,—viz.,

V. A Fold for Christ's Sheepe: delivered in Two Sermons [as before in No. 4.] The 12th impression, corrected and amended [as before.] 1649. [18mo.]

VI. Christ's Last Supper; or, the Doctrine of the Sacrament of Christ's Supper, set forth in five Sermons. Wherein is taught the great necessity of a godly preparation before men come to the Sacrament. Wherein it doth consist; with the condemnation threatened against the unworthy receiver of the same. By Samuel Smith [as before.] John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth,' &c. London: Printed by T. D. for John Bellamie, and are to be sold at the South Entrance of the Royall Exchange. 1620. [18mo.] Title-page. Epistle Dedicatory to Sir Ferdinando Dudley, &c., pp. 7. Table, pp. 21. Treatise, pp. 357.

\* \* In speaking of the comforts arising from our union with Christ, he makes this quaint remark,—‘Moses may marry an Ethiopian, but he cannot change her colour; but the Lord Jesus Christ shall make to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle.’ Of imperfect communion, he says, ‘Neither would I be so understood, as if there were no hope that God will accept of our service unless it be absolute in the manner of performing. God forbid we should so think: for then what would become of the best duties even of the best? No; better to hear in weakness than not to hear; better to pray with infirmity than not to pray, and to communicate with some defect than utterly to forbear. Better it is to limp and creep in the way than not to come at all.’

- VII. Christ's Preparation to His Owne Death. Delivered in three Sermons vpon the two and twentieth chapter of S. Luke, the 39, 40, and 41 verses. By Samuel Smith [as before.] London: Printed by Nicholas Okes. 1620. [18mo.] Title-page. Epistle Dedicatory to Lady Mary Weld, pp. 4. To the Reader, pp. 4. Table, pp. 4. Treatise, pp. 150.
- VIII. A Christian Taske: a Sermon preached at the Funerall of Maister John Lawson, Gentleman, at Prittlewell in Essex, on the 28th of December 1619. By Samuel Smith [as before.] London: [as in No. 7.] 1620. [18mo.] Title-page. Epistle Dedicatory, pp. 3. Sermon, pp. 78. [Text, Psalm xc. 12.]
- IX. David's Repentance; or, a Plaine and Familiar Exposition of the 51st Psalm, first preached and now published for the benefit of the Church. The 13th edition, newly revised; most needful for this time. By Samuel Smith [as before.] London. 1642. [18mo.]
- \* \* I have been unable to see the first edition.
- X. Noah's Dove; or, Tydings of Peace to the Godly: a comfortable Sermon preached at a Funerall. The second impression, corrected and amended by the author, Samuel Smith [as before.] London: [as in No. 7.] 1620. [18mo.] Title-page. To the Reader, pp. 5. Table, p. 1. Sermon, pp. 51. [Text, Psalm xxxvii. 37.]
- XI. The Chiefe Shepheard; or, An Exposition upon y<sup>e</sup> xxiii. Psalm. Wherein is set downe y<sup>e</sup> most excellent priviledges of those y<sup>t</sup> have y<sup>e</sup> Lord for their Shepheard, and that live vnder his most gracious protection. Most needful for y<sup>e</sup> time. By Samuel Smith [as before.] London: [as in No. 7.] 1625. [18mo.] Title-page. Epistle Dedicatory to ‘Mr Edward Seabrid, Esq.’ Treatise.
- XII. The Admirable Convert; or, The Miraculous Conversion of the Thieve on the Cross, with the Finall Impenitency of the other. By Samuel Smith, Minister of the Word of God. London: 1632. [18mo.] Title-page. Epistle Dedicatory to ‘Sir Richard Greaves, Kt. and Lady.’ Treatise.
- XIII. The Ethiopian Eynch's Conversion; or, The Summe of Thirtie Sermons vpon part of the Eight Chapter of Acts. By Samuel Smith, Minister of the Word. London: Printed by Thomas Harper for Thomas Alchorne, and are to be sold at his shop in Paul's Church-yard at the Signe of the Green Dragon. 1632. [18mo.] Title-page. Epistle Dedicatory to Sir Richard Newport, pp. 6. Contents, pp. 8. Treatise, pp. 540.

XIV. Moses his Prayer; or, An Exposition of the Nintieth Psalme. In which is set forth the Frailty and Misery of Mankind. Most needfull for these Times.

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|---------|---|
| Wherein | 1. The Sum and Scope.                   |
|         | 2. The Doctrines.                       |
|         | 3. The Reasons.                         |
|         | 4. The Uses of most Texts are observed. |

By Samuel Smith, Minister of the Gospel, Author of 'David's Repentance and the Great Assize,' and yet living. London: Printed by W. Wilson, and are to be sold at his House in Well-yard neare West-Smithfield. 1656. [18mo.] Title-page. Epistle Dedicatory 'to the truly religious, and his much honored Friend, Mr Samuel Freborne, and his religious consort in Prittlewell in Essex,' pp. 2. To the Reader, pp. 2. Treatise, pp. 544. Table, pp. 6.

\* \* Two short extracts from this extremely uncommon volume will be acceptable: the first reminding of Cragge, the other of Jeremy Taylor:—'Seeing there was a time when there was no mountain, earth, or world, but that God was the creator of them all: then the heavens that are above us, and the earth that is below us, and all the creatures that are in the world, they may serve to teach us this lesson, that there is [a] God! Though these teach us not this lesson as the Scriptures teach us, yet they are as a Christian's primer to teach us to spell. For God teacheth us two ways. 1. By his philosophy-lecture in the creature. . . . 2. By his divinity-lecture in the Word.' . . . 'Riches require pains to get them, care to keep them, and have their vexation to part with them. They are of a flowing nature like water: they have their wings, and many times of a sudden fly away: physic, lawsuits, fire, water, and the like, are the moths that consume them. This flower also fadeth away.'

XV. A Looking-Glass for Saints and Sinners; or, An Exposition on the Second Epistle of Saint John: a most needfull Treatise for these Apostatizing times wherein we live, fit to be read, but [to be] practised by all Christians. By Samuel Smith, [as in No. 14.] London: Printed by W. W. for Nathaniel Brookes at the Angel in Cornhill. 1663. Title-page. Verses by Taylor, [as in Memoir, *ante*.] To the Reader. Treatise, pp. 299. Table, pp. 4. Curiously enough the running title throughout is 'A Looking-Glass for Ladies.'

XVI. The Christian's Guide. [18mo.] This passed through many editions: but I have not met with it, and therefore place it last, though probably published early.

\* \* With reference to the Exposition of 'Hosea c. vi.,' it is mentioned by Baxter in his 'Reliquiae,' (p. 9.) and by Calamy, (as before:) but I have not been able to trace it anywhere, either in our great Public Libraries or private collections. In the 'Catalogue of our English Writers on the Old and New Testament,' (2d edition,) 1668, it is duly entered *in loco* thus, 'Hosea chap. vi., on the whole. Samuel Smith. Quarto. 1617.' If correctly dated, it must have been his second book. It is greatly to be desired that a copy may turn up.

Such is the modest Story and such the Writings of SAMUEL SMITH. It is, after all our anxious seeking, but a small and slightly-scented wreath that we have been able to twine around his holy

memory. Nevertheless, as for lines hitherto we have given as many pages, and made certain the uncertain, and correct what has been told incorrectly, our votive offering may perchance help to revive the name of the 'good old man.' A single volume of this Series would include all he published: but there is matter in his little books that his contemporaries and ours now, would have beat from massive gold into tinsel-leaf. His writing is not mere sentence-making or pretty sentimentalisms, but living and quickening thoughts. Neither is it book-making, but intense, passionate, wistful pleading as for very life with perishing souls, or gentle, tear-soft, devout consolation for the smitten and lorn, and hurt and weary 'by reason of the way.' Ever and anon there are melodious sayings, terse apophthegmatic or aphoristic statements of 'doctrine,' unforgettable remonstrances, odd illustrations, quaint and archaic words,—through all a dominating purpose to bring men to the Cross of Jesus, to Jesus on the Cross. While, therefore, dear old MILES SMITH did mightier service in our 'English Bible,' and HENRY SMITH the silver-tongued had more of the mystic gift of genius, and JOHN SMITH the 'Essex Dove,' and JOHN SMITH of the 'True Patterne,' and—the greatest of all—JOHN SMITH of the 'Select Discourses,' were more learned, and other SMITHS earlier and later have made more noise, and been more on men's tongues, our saintly SAMUEL SMITH has this record 'on high,' that in a sliding age he stood firm; in an age of making big books without end he chose the tiniest size; in an age of Conformity in Church and State he asserted the Divine peculiarity of the Christian, and spoke and wrote straight out of his own 'good and honest heart' of 'the things' that 'belong' to 'everlasting life.' Sure we are that the more his little books are studied the more will their former boundless popularity be understood, and the more a wish be cherished—if not a hope—that the present small reprint may send readers in search of all. And so THOMAS MACE may close our Memoir, and speak for plain but wise, unpretending but solid, lowly but Divinely-taught, outwardly rough but inwardly rich SAMUEL SMITH:—

'Look for no painted outside here,  
But for a work devotedly sincere:  
A thing low prized in these too high-flown days:  
Such solid sober works get little praise.

Yet some there be  
Love true solidity.

And unto such brave, noble souls I write  
In hopes to do them and the subject right:  
I write it not to please the itching vein  
Of idle-headed fashionists, or gain  
Their fond applause:  
I care for no such noise.

I write it only for the sober sort,  
Who love right learning, and will labour for't;  
And who will value worth in art, though old,  
And not be weary of the good, though told  
'Tis out of fashion  
By nine-tenths of the nation.

I writ it also out of great good will  
Unto my countrymen: and leave my skill  
Behind me for the sakes of those that may  
Not yet be born: but in some after day  
May make good use  
Of it, without abuse.'

ALEXANDER B. GROSART.





## THOMAS PIERSON, M.A.

**H**ITHERTO the name of the author of the good book called 'Excellent Encouragements against Afflictions; or Expositions of Four Select Psalmes,'—now 'after so long a time' reprinted,—has been found in none of the usual sources of information, except in the very slightest way: and when asked to prepare a Memoir, the present Writer feared—after considerable research—that in this case the volume had proved at once monument and grave; bearing, indeed, the name down for loving regard by those who prized its 'apples of gold in basketwork of silver,' but leaving the man himself to turn to dust, unknown, unknowable. Persistent inquiries at last resulted in a few names and dates that guided me to the HARLEIAN MSS. in the British Museum; and there I found, all unused, a Memorial consisting of pleasant and garrulous 'Notices,' by a nameless contemporary, of the Rectors of Brampton-Brian, and so, among the rest, of Pierson. This led to other subsidiary discoveries; and I am thus fortunate enough at this late day to give, for the first time, a Memoir of one who is never named by those who knew him without 'famous,' or 'learned,' or 'faithful,' or other noticeable or kindly epithet. It was provoking to find an EDMUND CALAMY using the former, with other equally appreciating words, and CHRISTOPHER HARVEY,—whose 'Synagogue' is for all time associated with the 'Temple' of GEORGE HERBERT,—editing his book with the veneration and tenderness of a son towards a father; not forgetting that to him WILLIAM PERKINS and THOMAS BRIGHTMAN confided their 'Workes' for 'the presse,'—and yet to know nothing, or no more than these facts, concerning him. If henceforward it will not be so that elaborate 'county' Histories, while recording with fulness, even to superfluity, names that the world should have been very willing 'to let die'—your merely 'ancient' Smiths, Browns, Robinsons, and Joneses, in so far as word of power, or beneficent deed goes—have not a line for this Cheshire 'Worthy' and Herefordshire 'Pastor' of the fine old type, perchance our little service may be remembered too,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> After I had discovered, or recovered, the Harleian MS., and transcribed it for my purpose, I had the pleasure to receive from Lady Frances Harcourt a family MS. volume, which, along with various other most interesting Papers, contains a careful copy of it: and through 'Notes and Queries' I had been previously directed, by Sir Thomas E. Winnington, to one of the Camden Society's publications, viz., 'Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley, wife of Sir Robert Harley, of Brampton Bryan, Knight of the Bath, with Introduction and Notes by Thomas Taylor Lewis, A.M., Vicar of Bridstow, Herefordshire, 1853.' The 'Introduction' and 'Notes' by Mr Lewis are careful so far as they go; but that is not far, and as concerning PIERSON, they are meagre and careless. I wish very cordially to thank Lady Harcourt for her spontaneous kindness in forwarding her valuable Family MS. to me. The original is Harleian MSS. 7517. I had hoped to have added to my materials from the MSS. of the industrious Cole. In Wood's *Athenae*, under CHRISTOPHER HARVEY, Dr Bliss has added to his mention of Pierson the following note, 'Vide my MS. collections in the British Museum Vol. P., p. 173.—*Cole*.' But with all the assistance of the authorities at the *British Museum* I could not find such a volume, or any volume marked 'P.' Moreover, the only reference to Pierson in the Cole MSS. consists of one line, merely stating that he was of Emmanuel College. I turned up 'Emmanuel College,' and every other conceivable heading—in vain.

all the more, that even the all-comprehending 'Athenæ Cantabrigienses' of Messrs Cooper has not a single word to tell.<sup>1</sup>

The old Manuscript, on which mainly is our dependence for this Memoir, begins quaintly,<sup>2</sup> 'To write the story of a wicked person is to execute his memory, and sprinkle ashes with the blaynes of Egypt. To write the life of a good man, is to perfume the world, and to repeat y<sup>e</sup> presents of the queen of Sheba with nobler spices.' Then after classical allusion to Cæsar and other mighty 'bad' men, in contrast with suffering 'saints,' we have a glimpse of the desolation and terror of the period during which the 'Notices' were drawn up—probably while the Civil War was raging. 'Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: ye Garden enclosed of God is ruined into a wilderness, the howling wilderness is become a Paradise, the balm of Canaan is transplanted into the desert of Egypt, the wild Gentile olive hath sucked away the fattness and sweetness from the natural branches;—a bit of sermonising that seems to half-mourn, half-hope, over the 'changes' accomplished and threatened. Subsequent 'Notices' shew sympathy with the 'Ejected' of 1662.

We now reach the 'Notice' proper thus: 'Mr Thomas Pierson, whose name and memory deserves alwayes to be honoured, was born at Weaverham in Cheshire, in or about the year 1570.' The Registers of Weaverham contain no notices of Piersons: none of the 'baptism' of our 'Thomas.' From after-facts it is pretty certain his parents were humble—As Habington sung of 'Castara':—

"Folly boasts a glorious blood,  
He is noblest—being good."

The 'hamlet' of Weaverham may now add to its annals a name of worth, if not in the vulgar sense as 'great' as that EARL EDWIN of whom it boasts 'before the Conquest,' or that HUGO LUPUS, who held 'the manor' at the Survey of 'Domesday,'—may place it beside that of EDWARD MARBURY, the racy and spiritual 'Commentator' on OBADIAH and HABAKKUK—spring of the Marburys of Marbury, to whom the 'lands' passed, and by whose collateral descendants they are owned at this day. It was meet birthplace for one whose best fame is that he was a 'faithful' under-Shepherd of the Master-Shepherd. Meadows sloping down to the 'Weever'—which gleams through sylvan coppices,—and now, as then, the grand old cathedral-like Church the centre object—compose a sweet Landscape. The village-town itself, on the road leading by Acton Bridge from Tarporley to Warrington, deserves a visit. Narrow in its streets, its houses old timbered, its aspect Elizabethan, not Victorian. The long-standing 'May-poles' reminded many generations of the conflict excited by JAMES and CHARLES and LAUD, between the Book of God and the Book of Sports.<sup>3</sup> At the time Master Pierson made his advent, 'WILLIAM HOLCROFT'—whose name I think I have met with in some old title-pages, unless it be that it is the echo of WILLIAM HOLBROOKE, the chosen friend of JOHN RANDALL—was 'parson' of WEAVERHAM.

Situated conveniently near to 'Northwich,' where was a School that afterwards gave it celebrity,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Vols. 8vo. Vol. ii., 1586-1609, covers Pierson's term. Are we never to get Vol. iii.?

<sup>2</sup> All quotations not otherwise marked are to be understood as taken from the Harleian MS.

<sup>3</sup> See OMBROD'S History of the County Palatine and City of Chester. 3 Vols., folio, 1819. According to him, the 'Registers' of 'Baptisms' at Weaverham begin in 1694: marriages, 1695: burials, 1678. [Vol. I., 59.] This is a mistake, as I learn from the present Incumbent: they go back more than a century farther: but a search gave no Piersons under any of the headings.

young PIERSON went thither—Says our MS., ‘by the care of his parents and friends [he] was brought up to learning at Northwich, a market-town about three miles from Weaverham.’ The ‘Will’ of our Worthy shewed that he never forgot the scenes of his birth and boyhood—as we shall see. GEORGE WHITNEY, whose ‘Emblems’ have recently been reproduced with rare lovingness, and not less cunning skill, by Mr Green; JOHN GERARDE the ‘Herbalist;’ THOMAS HARRISON, who is made to stand out so livingly by GUIZOT in his ‘History,’ without the legend beneath his name of ‘regicide’ lessening his estimate, and grander than all that other ‘regicide’ ‘President Bradshaw,’ whom the mighty portrait of MILTON has made immortal, and Mrs Milton (*tertio*),<sup>1</sup>—all belong to the immediate district, earlier and later than PIERSON.<sup>2</sup> Whether he knew any of these contemporary with him is not recorded: but the whole make of his mind may assure us that if a copy of the ‘Emblems’ found its way anywhere from Holland, it would be to the ‘Rectory’ of his fellow-countryman in Brampton-Brian.

He ‘profited’ so well at Northwich that ‘he was removed to Cambridge, and admitted there into Emmanuel College, which was newly founded a few years before by that religious and renowned Knight, Sir Walter Mildmay.’ Elsewhere I have described Cambridge, and the ‘men and things’ of this particular College.<sup>3</sup> The selection of ‘Emmanuel,’ which was *Puritanissimum Puritanorum*, probably indicates the home-nurture. ‘There he continued,’ proceeds our old Notice-writer, ‘being maintained partly by his own industry, partly by exhibitions from others—his parents’ estate being too small to defray such a charge—until he had commenced Master of Arts.’ It would seem that the previous steps have not been preserved—doubtless by the neglect of that Master ‘Smith,’ or one of the same class, so characteristically ‘blamed’ by THOMAS FULLER.<sup>4</sup> He ‘was admitted into sacred orders on the 11th of March 1598, according to the custome of the Church of England, by the then Bishop of Colchester, suffragan to the Bishop of London.’ Following on this—like JOHN GOODWIN, later, in his native Norfolk—he proceeded homeward as a Preacher, occupying, no doubt, first of all the pulpit of Weaverham, having father and mother in his auditory. ‘The next year,’ being 1599, ‘he was entertained to preach as a constant Lecturer at NORTHWICH, and so continued two years, there sowing the seeds of religion first where first he had taken in the seed of learning. The next two years [1601–1602] he spent in the like manner at Weaverham, where he was born.’ Very pleasing is this ‘beginning’ of his ‘preaching,’ and abiding for four years ‘among his own people.’ Mr Holcroft had been succeeded by a Mr Shallcross on ‘Dec. 7th 1575,’ who continued until 1614. In 1602–3 he returned to CAMBRIDGE, ‘where he had formerly contracted intimate acquaintance with divers of the best repute for learning and religion, especially with that famous example of a faithful minister, Mr WILLIAM PERKINS, who held him in a very dear esteem.’ PERKINS died in 1602; and PIERSON was appointed by his Executors to publish certain of his hitherto unpublished writings, and to collect his ‘Workes’ into the well-known three folios, which are as ‘quick’ to-day with great

<sup>1</sup> It has escaped the Biographers of Milton that in the ‘Sermons’ of ISAAC KIMBER, is one preached at the funeral of Mrs Milton at Nantwich.

<sup>2</sup> See Green’s reprint, as above, with a scholarly and most interesting Introduction; Omerod, *as before*: Guizot’s ‘History of the Revolution;’ Milton’s ‘Defensio.’

<sup>3</sup> In *Memoirs of Sibbes and Brookes*; Sibbes’ Works, Vol. i. pp. xviii–lvii; Brookes’ Works, Vol. i. pp. xxiv–vi.

<sup>4</sup> Brookes, *as before*, Vol. i. pp. xxii–iii.

thoughts and burning love and tenderness as of old, if it must be confessed only the 'few' read them now, as compared with the multitudes who hung on his lips, and who, at home and abroad, welcomed his volumes as priceless legacies.

Turning to the 'Workes' of Perkins, as thus given to the world by our Worthly, it is only in volumes ii. and iii. that his hand appears. In the former is the very remarkable 'Treatise' of 'Man's Imagination,' shewing 'his natural evil thoughts: his want of good thoughts: the way to reform them.' To this is prefixed an Epistle Dedicatory 'to the Right Worshipfull Sir Thomas Holcroft, Knight, with the vertuous Lady Elizabeth, his wife.' In this excellent 'Epistle'—which has the *aroma* of SIBBES about it—he excuses any lengthened observations of his own, 'because my gates may not be great before so small a city;' then speaking of God's asking of the heart, 'My son, give ME thy heart,' he has some fine touches on the heart—*e.g.*, 'But what is man's heart that it should be so desired? Surely in substance little, but for employment almost infinite. It is a treasure whereout man bringeth all his actions, good or evil: it is a temple wherein is placed either the ark of God, or Dagon for the devil. Yea, it is a place wherein dwelleth, and a throne whereon sitteth, either Christ or Satan, the King of glory, or the prince of darkness; and he that keeps possession will there exercise dominion.' He tells with becoming pride the charge committed to him, at the same time turning it into a felicitous compliment, which was more than a compliment, to the Holcrofts. 'The publishing hereof being committed unto me,' . . . 'the first-fruits of my labour in this kind, wherein I had full power of free choice in my dedication, it may intimate to you both [the dedication of it] mine unfeigned heart's desire of that everlasting good I wish unto your souls, and also testifying in part my thankful mind for your manifold favours to me and mine, who depend upon you.'<sup>1</sup> Then to the Reader, 'Know, good reader, that for my furtherance in the publishing of this tractate I had the author's own draught of the platform of it, beside two perfect copies of all his sermons. I have for plainness' sake divided it into chapters and sections, for the better effecting whereof I was constrained to transpose two of the uses; otherwise, I doubt not but every one that heard it preached will judge me to have dealt faithfully with the godly author. The Lord prosper it to thy good.'<sup>2</sup> This is dated 'Cambridge, August 20, 1606.' In volume iii., there is the 'Godly and learned Exposition of Christ's Sermon on the Mount,' which PIERSON dedicates to 'The Right Honourable Oliver Lord St John, Baron of Bletso;' and he herein notes that 'This Sermon containeth twelve several heads of doctrine, answerable, indeed, to the number of the twelve apostles, to whom it was principally intended upon their calling to that office;' and he modestly describes his part in the publication, 'My pains herein hath been chiefly this, as near as I could, out of mine own and others' notes, to commend unto the public view the author's faithful labours in his own meaning. Only I have here and there, upon good occasion, though private to myself, added some references in the margin unto classical Popish writers for such opinions as are herein charged upon them. Mine interest for the publishing of this work I hope I shall approve unto any gainsayer.'<sup>3</sup> In an 'Advertisement' to the Christian Reader, concerning the Works of PERKINS, he explains why certain others were not given, and appeals to all possessed of MSS. to submit them to him and the other executors.<sup>4</sup> This is dated 'May 1608.'

Following this is the 'Crowd of Faithful Witnesses leading to the Heavenly Canaan; or, a

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. 454.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 455.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. iii. pp. 1, 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 4.

Commentary upon the Eleventh Chapter to the Hebrews,' in the editing of which he was associated with WILLIAM CRASHAW, father of the poet RICHARD CRASHAW,<sup>1</sup> and as staunch a Protestant as was his son a Papist.<sup>2</sup> Working out the conceit of the 'Pillar of Cloud' which Israel followed, in contrast with that we follow, in the Epistle Dedicatory, 'to the noble and virtuous gentleman, Sir John Sheffield Knight, and Mr Oliver St John,' the two like-minded editors remark, 'We have a notable light in this learned Commentary, which we must confess is much obscured for lack of the refining hand of the godly author himself. But now, seeing that shining light is quenched, use this our lamp. It is fed with such oil as we received in the Lord's sanctuary, from that olive-tree whence many an one did fill his vessel.'<sup>3</sup> This is dated 'Nov. 10, 1608.' Next there is the 'Godly and learned Exposition or Commentary upon the three first chapters of the Revelations;' 'the second edition, revised and enlarged after a more perfect copy.' This is dedicated to Lady Elizabeth Montagu of Hemington in Northamptonshire, from 'London, December 10th, 1606,' and besides has a golden little address 'to the godly and Christian reader,' explaining how the additions are no 'reflection' upon him who first published those 'Sermons.'<sup>4</sup> Finally, there is the 'Combate betweene Christ and the Devill displayed; or a Commentarie upon the Temptations of Christ,' also 'much enlarged by a more perfect copie.' This is inscribed to Sir William and Lady Russell. It is dated 'Cambridge, Emmanuel College, 25th June, 1606.'<sup>5</sup> Besides the first preparation of these several treatises, PIERSON 'corrected the faults of the press, and composed the tables' of the whole. 'He was likewise employed in publishing some of Mr Brightman's workes, especially in correcting the first most extreme faulty impression of his 'Commentarie on the Apocalyps.' Of these two 'labours of love,' CALAMY takes special notice in giving his '*imprimatur*' to the publication of 'Excellent Encouragements,'—the book here reprinted. I place the testimony below.'<sup>6</sup>

Throughout, on the title-pages of PERKINS, PIERSON is designated 'Preacher of God's Word'; and this extending from 1605-6 to 1608-9. Two influential events occurred during these years: one more personal and private, the other public—viz., his marriage, and his appointment as 'chaplain' in the noble family of St John. The former, which I notice first, has simply been known from the fact that Pierson left a 'widow;' but when it took place, or to whom, has never before been ascertained. By one of those lucky chances,—of which in the course of these biographic studies I have had my full share,—it is my good-fortune to be able to give it authentically. For, called on to 'search' the Registers of Bunbury in preparing my Memoir of SAMUEL TORSELL, I obtained other memoranda, which for the first time determined who was the father of CHRISTOPHER HARVEY, the 'sweet singer'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Turnbull's Crashaw.

<sup>2</sup> On the title-page it is added, 'who heard him preach it, and wrote it from his mouth.'

<sup>3</sup> Works of Perkins, Vol. iii., 2nd Part, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Part iii. pp. 363-65.

<sup>6</sup> 'The Author of these ensuing Sermons, Mr Thomas Pierson, was so famous "in his generation," such a "burning and shining light," and so instrumental to the good of the Church, both by his own indefatigable labours in the ministry of the Gospel, as also by the publishing of divers Treatises of Mr Perkins and Mr Brightman, that I could not but do him this right, not only to give an *Imprimatur* to this Commentary of his upon some Psalmes, but also to signifie to the reader the piete, learning, and worth of the author, and to commend these his Sermons to every good Christian, as holding out many orthodox and savoury truths, and by obedience to which truths many souls went to heaven, without entangling themselves in the many unedifying janglings of these sad, divided times.'—ED. CALAMY.

July the 6th, 1647.

This gratifying 'Note' of the Presbyterian minister to his Episcopalian brother is carefully transferred to the Harleian MS.

of the 'Synagogue,' to wit, the Rev. Christopher Harvey of Bunbury;<sup>1</sup> and now another 'entry' in the same Registers informs us that the elder Harvey's widow became the wife of PIERSON. It is as follows:—

Matrimonia, 1608 [1609 according to our style.]

Feb. 21. Thomas Pierson of Weaverham, presbyter: and  
Ellen Harvie of Banburie, *Wid[ow].*<sup>2</sup>

Thus the mother of the younger and more famous CHRISTOPHER HARVEY became the wife of one every way worthy to rank with the saintly 'pastor' of Bunbury; and here we have the explanation of the poet Harvey editing the 'Excellent Encouragements' of PIERSON, and writing such charming 'Epistles Dedicatory'—of which more in the sequel. Such a step-father could not fail to win the love and reverence of such a step-son—the more, perhaps, that the good 'pastor' of Brampton-Brian had no family of his own.

The second and more public event of this period was his appointment, as stated, of 'household chaplaine to the Right Honourable Oliver Lord St John, Baron Bletso in Bedfordshier,' whose name, along with that of his eldest son, 'then Oliver St John, Esq., afterwards Earle of Bullingbrooke,' [Bolingbroke] appears in the 'Epistles Dedicatory' to Perkins. Here he remained in the greatest honour, and with much usefulness, until 1612. Afterwards, describing his 'industry,' our Manuscript gives a glimpse of him at Bletso:—'His industry was exceeding great, both in the publike exercise of his ministry, and in his private preparation for it. When he was chaplaine to my Lord St John, his usuall time for study was from four in the morning until eleven at night, meal-tymes excepted, and such intermissions as were occasioned by others during that time. He did ordinarily preach to the publike congregation at Church twice every Lord's day, and in the weeke dayes to the family, every Tuesday and Friday in the evening before supper: and besides all that, for the last year of his being there, to the end that the kookees, and others whose employments were like to hinder them from the publike congregation, might be partakers of the like means of grace which others should enjoy, he did catechise and pray with them early in the morning every Lord's day, and after supper repeat both the morning and evening sermon, with singing of psalms and prayer, at which the whole family was present. Nor did he—as many doe—entertaine his auditours with rawe, undigested rhapsodies, and so offer sacrifice unto God of that which cost him nothing for paines of preparation; but the heads of his sermons he wrote beforehand, usually carrying his notes with him into the pulpit, many times revising them afterwards, and copying them out anew. He was of the same mind with Mr Perkins, who (as he reported) was used to say that he would never satisfy himself concerning any of his owne sermons, untill he had preached it—all the time he lived in Herefordshire.'

While 'chaplaine' at 'Bletso,' PIERSON went and came between CAMBRIDGE. Probably, if we had the facts, it would prove that he did so as overwatching the University education of his step-children. The elder, CHRISTOPHER HARVEY, had died in 1601, leaving behind him, it is believed, a

<sup>1</sup> I may be allowed to refer here to a foot-note (§) in my Memoir of TORSELL, page xix., wherein, first of all, this long-missing bit of information was supplied—viz., the name and *locale* of the father of the Christopher Harvey who wrote the Synagogue. Anthony a-Wood had mentioned that he was 'son of a minister in Cheshire,' but neither he nor his erudite editor, (Dr Bliss,) nor the various editors of Herbert, knew his name or church. He is now found worthy son of worthy sire.

<sup>2</sup> I have again to thank the present Vicar of Bunbury (Rev. William Lowe) for kindly sending me additional 'entries,' which may be used elsewhere.

large family, who would naturally come under the care of their new father. Be this as it may, in 1612, he was 'presented' by Sir Robert Harley, of 'famous memorie,' to the Rectory of Brampton-Bryan, in the county of Hereford.<sup>1</sup> This, as it was the central thing in the story of our Worthy, so it was attended with circumstances that made it memorable for his whole life. These circumstances are told in our MANUSCRIPT with a beautiful piety and a quaint Scripture-wording, that remind of better than the 'Age of Chivalry,' of which the later KENELM DIGBY writes with such fine touch, even the 'Age of FAITH.' The father of Sir Robert was vehemently opposed to the new Rector, and after the grand Puritan pattern of godliness, 'prayer was made' that the gruff old knight might be made to relent as well towards his son as Mr Pierson. I cannot think of changing in any way the antique narrative, spite of its lingering and 'tattle' (not twaddle;) and so it follows in full, prologue and all:— 'The Holy Divine Spirit hath, in the Scripture of Truth, denounced most severe threatenings against those who neglect or refuse to make due observation of the particular actual providences of God in effecting and accomplishing the continuall instances of the severall, both gracious and judiciall, acts of the sovereign government of the world, which sin is the nurse and cradle of wretched and sottish atheism. "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink; that continue untill night till wine inflame them! and the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the Lord. Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge." (Isa. v. 11-13.) Also, "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts," (Ps. xvi. 4.) Also, "Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them and not build them up." Sir Robert Harley (as was mentioned) presented Mr Pierson to the Rectory of Brampton-Bryan, which could not have been performed had not the speciall Providence of God, diverse years before, upon a settlement of marriage, caused the Rectory of Brampton-Bryan to be conveyed to Sir Robert Harley: otherwise, Mr Pierson had not been placed at Brampton-Bryan. He did, indeed, succeed that most worthy person, Mr Thomas Peacock, of Brazen-Nose Colledge in Oxford, [Wood's *Athenae*, *s.n.*] who was a blessed instrument of converting Mr Robert Bolton: but it pleased God by a sudden feaver to determine the life of worthy Mr Peacock; upon which vacancy Mr Pierson, as before expressed, was presented to, and settled in the Rectory of Brampton-Bryan. Though there were no cause to be justly assigned to any failure in Mr Pierson's ministeriall functions, or decent behaviour and conversation, yet Mr Thomas Harley, father of Sir Robert Harley, and grandfather to Sir Ed. Harley, was instigated to grievous bitterness against holy and wise Mr Pierson, insomuch that Mr Harley made many vehement complaints against Mr Pierson, to that excellent prelate, Bishop Bennett, then Bishop of Hereford: who declared with great trouble that he received letters from Mr Harley, the father, against Mr Pierson, and letters from Sir Robert Harley, the son, on behalf of Mr Pierson. This was, then, the sad case of that family and place. But it pleased God, who is rich in undeserved mercy, to vouchsafe a most gracious answer to a day

<sup>1</sup> Full information on this and the other Harleys will be found in the Camden Society's volume already mentioned, in elucidating the 'Letters' of Sir Robert's gifted and devoted wife. The 'character' of Sir Robert in the Funeral Sermon by Froyssell is also given. Historically and biographically, this is one of the most interesting and valuable of the Camden Society's issues. It is a pity it should be limited to the (comparatively) few subscribers. With regard to the old gentlemen, Thomas Harley and Pierson, there is a Letter to his son, in which, refusing to allow Sir Robert to visit the Netherlands, he speaks in the most confiding way of the Rector. (p. xliii.)

of prayer for that end, solemnly observed at Staunage Lodge, a place in Brampton parish, then rented by Sir Robert Harley, where he and his most pious and vertuous then lady, sister of Sir Richard Newport, (afterwards Lord Newport,) and Mr Pierson and his godly wife, and some few others, presented supplications to the Lord, to turn the heart of Mr Thomas Harley to express kindness unto his son Sir Robert Harley, and friendship towards Mr Pierson. It pleased the Lord, who is the God that heareth prayer, to give an answer of peace concerning the forementioned particulars: for within a very short space of time Mr Harley, by a trusty servant, sent thus to Sir Robert Harley—*‘Tell my son, I will take care of the concerns of his estate and pay his debts; and tell him I will be friends with Mr Pierson—and then you will be a welcome messenger to my son.’* Accordingly, Mr Thomas Harley began and continued all expressions of high esteem and real friendship towards Mr Pierson: and as a testimony of his kindness, Mr Harley gave a copyhold estate in Brampton-Bryan, of about the yearly value of £13, to Mr Pierson and to his wife for their lives; which was accordingly enjoyed by Mr Pierson, and after his decease by his widow, Mrs Hellen Pierson, for about twenty years untill her death. Also Mr Harley, when his weakness and great age, exceeding fourscore years, disabled him from attending the publick worship, received with great regard the continuall ministeriall visits of Mr Pierson. The glory of all this free grace is humbly presented to magnify the mercy of Him who hath compassion on whom He will have compassion, though wretchedly offended and provoked to y<sup>e</sup> contrary.’ Without at all seeking to explain away the happy coincidence of these prayers in the chamber of STAUNAGE LODGE, and the reconciliation and friendship after persistent ‘enmity’ and provoking spitefulness, it must yet be remembered that both Sir Robert and Pierson had always shewn the profoundest respect toward the irate old gentleman, ‘answering not again;’ so that he could not but be touched by their inoffensive, uncomplaining gentleness.

Further on in the Manuscript we have one token of this which places both the elder Harley and Pierson in a favourable light. After some remarks on Luke xxi. 19,—which I place in a footnote as not unworthy of preservation,<sup>1</sup>—and of the reward of the ‘patience’ therein commanded and commended by the Lord, our Chronicler proceeds: ‘This hee of whom I am now speaking had evident and plentifull experience of, in one who was most likely, as most able, to have done him displeasure, and did it earnestly as then was conceived, not out of any distaste to his person, but disaffection unto his ministeriall fidelity: and not out of his own inclination so much as through the instigation of others, to whom, notwithstanding, Mr Pierson carried himself with such meekness of wisdom, according unto the direction of St James, that in the height of his spleen he complained to

<sup>1</sup> His [Pierson’s] meekness was such that mangre the malice of his most mischievous adversaries—whereof he had some to whom he never gave cause to be such—he still possess his soule in patience, according to that, whether precept or promise, of our Saviour, (Luke xxi. 19.) “In your patience possesse yee (or, according to the Syriack, “you shall possess”) your souls:” where that annotation in the margin of the Bible printed at London, 1592. is such I cannot let passe without taking special notice of it: *quanvis vos undique mala circumstant, fruinini nihilominus virtute vestra hec omnia fortiter sustinendo; q. d. non jubeo vos prætèxtu Evangelii gladios aut convitia in adversarios distringere: sed jubeo patientes esse: persequuntur vos sed non nocent.* “Although many evils compass you about, yet nevertheless doe you maintaine your courage, bearing all these things patiently. As if he should say, I do not bid you under pretence of the Gospell bend your swords or words of reproach against your adversaries: but I bid you be patient. They shall persecute, but they shall not hurt you.” The performance of which promise they have little reason to expect who care not or rather profess not to practise obedience to the precept: for the benefit presupposeth the duty, according to that of our apostle, (Heb. x. 36,) “Yee have need of patience,” &c. &c.



some of his confidants, that he knew not what to do by Mr Pierson because he could not anger him. The same partie afterward, when he came to himself and saw his error, did not forbear to say, as St Paul did of himself (Acts xxvi. 11) when he was a persecutor, that then he was mad. And to his dying day no man (except his nearest relations to him) was more in his esteem, more dear unto him, or in whom he put more confidence than Mr Pierson: so true is that of Solomon, "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." This person here intended is the same who was before mentioned, Mr Thomas Harley, whose conversion was the gracious answer to solemn humiliation and prayer on that behalf: and with humble adoration it is supplicated that the goodness of God, whose mercy endures for ever, may be continued the blessing and happiness of that family.'

Thus reconciled to the 'lord of the manor,'—whose sympathies with the 'old religion' which the Reformation overthrew, explain his dislike of the new Rector and his own son's Puritanism—PIERSON'S daily 'walk and conversation' filled up the ideal of the saintly 'Priest' of Bemerton—in character England's LEIGHTON—nay, to the letter, that of the New Testament, 'a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine' (1 Tim. iv. 6.) He seems to have modelled himself upon the twofold counsel of the Perirrhauterium:—

'Pitch thy behaviour low, thy projects high.'

And

'Sum up at night what thou hast done by day,  
And in the morning what thou hast to do.'<sup>1</sup>

He was a 'faithful,' a 'painful,' (in the fine old sense,) a rousing Preacher, and at first it would seem a BOANERGES, or 'son of thunder,' but John-like mellowed ultimately into a very Barnabas or 'son of consolation.' Outside the Church he was all that he was within it, presenting no sorrowful contrast to those who 'marked' him as he went hither and thither; nor did he sink the man in the 'priest' or 'parson,' but was shrewd, keen-eyed, and 'wise' in counsel among his parishioners. His wiseness seems to have specially impressed the ancient 'Notice' writer. I omit his overflow of texts, lauding 'wisdom' itself, and select the 'good words' about him:—'This most worthy servant of the Lord [was] a wise man—not only "wise unto salvation," but likewise in other things, or rather, indeed, in all things wise; both prudent, circumspect, discreet, and well-advised in his own business, and willing as well as able upon all occasions to give good advice unto others, not only for their spiritual, but likewise for their temporal states: so that not only in the parts where he dwelt, but likewise from other places where he was known, men made their addresses unto him for counsell, not only in cases of conscience, but likewise upon other important occasions. And no man, I think, ever went away from him unsatisfied in anything wherein either rules of religion, or principles of reason, or instances of experience could afford satisfaction. And whereas Solomon hath said, (Prov. xxiv. 26,) "Every man shall kisse his lips who giveth a right answer," he found it true by experience, that as he was always ready to give good counsell unto others, so his counsell had a more than ordinary influence upon the minds and hearts of men, or rather a prevailing power over them for its own entertainment.'

PIERSON, as a disciple of PERKINS, could not be other than a 'Preacher' of the Gospel with heart

<sup>1</sup> Herbert, Works, Vol. ii. pp. 13, 18. 2 vols. 8vo. 1853. (Pickering.)

and soul, rather than a 'stieckler' for the 'ceremonies' of the Church after the school of Laud. But here, also, he shewed his 'prudence' and wisdom, as we learn from our MS. :—' His moderation was such, that although he was generally reputed, as the times then were, a NONCONFORMIST, and his adversaries thought to have a great advantage of him that way—using their utmost endeavours to that purpose—yet he alwayes carried himself so discreetly, with such reverend respect unto those in authority, that he was well accepted of by them, and never in all his time was so much as once silenced or suspended, but alwayes enjoyed the liberty of his ministry. And although he had great acquaintance and intimate familiarity with some of the strictest and most eminent of that way, [Nonconformists,] yet he was so far from any passionate promoting of them, that some who had nearest relation with him did neither in his lifetime understand how he stood inclined, nor since his death could find any inclination in his papers. [This is a mistake, as will appear.] Peradventure he was of the same mind with him that said, it is a miserable commendation to be a witty disturber; and thought that the Gospel of peace would never gain anything by violent contention. But for Mr Pierson, the gesture of kneeling in the act of receiving the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, he did both use himself, and when occasion was offered, endeavour to satisfy others by whom it was scrupled. And for the other ceremonies, whatsoever his own opinion was, he did not by an obstinate professed refractoriness offer any affront unto them that were then in place of authority to urge them, but still kept a curate, one or other, by whom they were used.' If there was more of Melancthon than of Luther in all this it is not ours to judge him, in absence of a knowledge of the circumstances that determined his line of conduct. Still it looks somewhat odd to find him employing 'curates' to carry out those 'ceremonies' which he himself could not take part in. To him it would have been 'sin' as against his own conscience; but *per se* he cannot have regarded them as sinful. Thus alone is to be explained his semi-compulsion of his curates to perform these ceremonies. Our 'Notice' writer thus puts it :—' Mr Pierson was not a Nonconformist to the Liturgy, or any part thereof, for he read the whole in the absence of his curate, but only in respect of those two ceremonies—the cross in baptism and the surpasse: *yet he blamed and presented his own curate to the then Chancellor for refusing to weare it, having no reason against it, but only Mr Pierson's practice and example; withall telling his curate that he must weare it, unless he had cogent argument wherein he could not satisfy his own conscience.*' And again :—' When any would aske him about the lawfullness of the surpasse he would thus answer, Have ye any argument against it? If they said none, then he would tell them againe, Neither will I put any into your heads. So careful was he to preserve unity in the Church.' So far so good. Nevertheless, as actions speak louder than words, it does seem hard on the poor curate to be 'presented' to the Chancellor for doing what his 'Rector' did. It must not, however, be supposed that Pierson was pusillanimous in the assertion of his principles, or that he never came in conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities. In such an age that had implied less than fidelity, more than compliance. It is with a sense of relief, accordingly, that we find these words in the funeral sermon of Sir Robert Harley by Froyssell of Clun :—' He [Sir Robert] was a great honourer of godly ministers: he carried them in his bosome; of all men in the world they sat next to his heart; he did hug them in his dearest embraces. I must tell you he was their sanctuary in evill times. *How oft hath he interposed between them and dangers!* When sinfull greatnesse did frown upon them, this great man would shew himselfe upon the stage

for them. When Mr Pierson was questioned before the Bishop, Sir Robert Harley was not afraid to appear constantly in his defence. I could tell you that he felt the frowns and displeasures of a near relation rather than he would desert that servant of Jesus Christ.' That Pierson had sufficient reasons 'against the ceremonies he scrupled,' is evident by a Paper which was found among his MSS., and which qualifies an earlier statement that he left no 'inclination,' *i.e.*, indication, behind him. It is as follows:—

' GROUNDS OF REASONS AGAINST THE CÉREMONIES.

- ' 1. I desier to see good warrant for a proper ministering garment under the Gospell.
- ' 2. That a proper Massing garment can be decent for Christ's ministers of the Gospell in his service.
3. Good warrant for the use of significant ceremonies in God's service, such as ours be.
4. Whether these, being idolatries in Rome, should not be rejected as idolatries out of God's service?'

But passing from these more outward matters, the service by which the Rector of Brampton-Brian most of all impressed his generation was what may be called his home-missionary work, within and all around his own Parish, in combination with the 'training' of the younger clergy for their duties. This is told garrulously enough, still so interestingly, in our Manuscript, that I cannot think of withholding the admiring Narrative, and therefore, as before, give it untouched—the more that these 'Lectures' were practically a revival of those 'prophecying's' which had given such deadly offence to Elizabeth, exciting her displeasure with Archbishop Grindall, and calling forth his intrepid 'Letter' to Her Majesty,<sup>2</sup> and giving the world also Jeremy Taylor's immortal 'Liberty of Prophecying,' our theological *Areopagitica*. As already mentioned in relation to the chaplaincy at Bletso, our Notice-writer magnifies the 'industry' of PIERSON, and continues where we left off, thus:—' Besides his constant preaching at home, twice every Lord's-day, and all dayes appointed for humiliation by publike authority, he ordinarily kept course himself, and sometimes supplied other men's courses, in many week-day lectures, whereof one at Leintwardine, two miles from Brampton, as it led the way to all the rest, so for some remarkable circumstances might well deserve not only to carry the credit from them all, but likewise to be a pattern to others.' Then more specifically:—' Mr Pierson at his first coming into Herefordshire observing the country to be slenderly furnished of able ministers, especially of such as tooke care to discharge the duties of their places diligently, when he was growne into acquaintance with them that were willing to promote the cause of religion—amongst whom the very reverend, religious, learned, and faithfull servant of God, Mr Stephens, vicar of Bishop's Castle, in the county of Salop, was one of the chief—he procured them to joyne with him in obtaining a license from the then Bishop of Hereford, Dr Bennet, for a monthly lecture to be held at Leintwardine, a parish adjoining unto Brampton, and bordering upon Shropshire: wherein there had been a great religious, or rather superstitious house, which—as others of that nature in other places—having robbed the Church of the greater tieths, left the vicaridge of a very great parish reduced to a very small proportion of means; and the Vicar accordingly being but

<sup>1</sup> Lady Harley's 'Letters,' *as before*, p. xxxiv.

<sup>2</sup> Grindall's 'Remains,' (Parker Society,) p. 376.

meanly qualified there was little encouragement to hope that his successors should be much better. The choice of the place, though in this and some other respects very convenient for the purpose, was not all that care was taken for; but likewise the choice of the persons that should preach the Lecture—whereof the number was resolved to be eight, all such as were allowed by authority to be publick preachers and benefited within the same deanery. Of these eight, foure, of whom Mr Pierson was one, were appointed to be moderators; and they had liberty granted unto them by the bishop to call before them such as they thought fit, within the same deanery, whether benefited men or curates, that were not preachers publickly licensed: whom—allowing them a month's time for preparation—they enjoyned to exercise before them and the rest of the ministers privately, appointing each man in particular some article of the Creed, or petition in the Lord's Prayer, or one of the Tenne Commandments to dilate upon. Which course was willingly and readily submitted unto by some; others who had better abilities, (in their own conceits,) and thought (as themselves said) to be dealt with like school-boys [was rather too much] refused to exercise before the ministers privately, but offered, if they might be admitted, to preach to the publick congregation: to whom was answered, that if they would first shew their diligence at home in preaching to their own congregations, they should be entertained unto the publick Lecture, otherwise not; and that if they would not conforme themselves to observe such directions as were given for the private employment enjoyned them, they must expect to answer their refusal to the Bishop. This Course was the means of so much good that by degrees in time the country thereabouts came to be furnished in most places with ministers of commendable abilities, and such as were carefull to take pains in their own places. For whose further encouragement and assistance, when first the Lecture at Leintwardine was set up, there was course likewise taken for an ordinary, at a reasonable rate, to be provided, where the ministers might dine together by themselves without any other company: and that after dinner some question of controversy, or some case of conscience, or the interpretation of some difficult place of Scripture should be propounded: and those that were present intreated to consider of it, that they might be provided to deliver their opinions that day month. After this many other Lectures were set up by license from the same Bishop and his successor, Dr Godwin, in divers other places of that country neer adjoining, in Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Radnorshire, in some of which Mr Pierson was himself an assistant constantly, and alwayes an encourager, at least, to others: so that it is not easy to conceive how much the cause of religion in those parts was promoted by his industry, diligence, and prudent discretion in managing the affaires thereof.<sup>1</sup> Further:—'Nor was his care confined to the publick only; but his family [= household, for he had no children of his own] was a nursery both of learning and religion: wherein many were brought up and fitted for the Universities, and others, when they were come from the Universities, were by his directions and example trained up for the ministry—he being a most exact grammarian in Latine, Greek, and Hebrew: a perfect artist to all who understand, as it doth appear by his short posthume Notes upon some select Psalms,' [*i.e.*, 'Excellent Encouragements,' here reprinted.] Coincident with this

<sup>1</sup> Our MS., in a 'Notice' of Stephens, gives an incidental confirmation of the urgent need for Pierson's scheme:—'Mr Gwalter Stephens of Bishop's Castle, who had lighted his candle at famous Mr Pierson's of Brampton Bryan, used to say that when he preached in his younger days for a great space, there was never a preacher between him and the sea one way, and none near him the other, but one in Shrewsbury.'

supervision of the 'Lectureships' was a feature to a great degree peculiar to PIERSON and his circle; for the Puritans as a rule thought rather lightly of 'seasons' and 'days,' including Christmas itself, viz., his 'courses' during the Fasts of the year. Our Notice-writer speaks of this reverentially:—'Mr Pierson zealously, with great profit to the countrey, kept the four Ember Fasts yearly, which were the four yearly quarterly termes, according to the appointment and practise of the Christian Church, wherein by solemn fasting and prayer the grace of God was implored for the due ordination of pious and able persons for the ministry of the Gospell in the Church.' Again:—'Concerning the observation of those Ember Fastes, the great and constant resort of many godly persons from remote places, was as the flight of doves to the windowes of holy light.' Further:—'He refreshed many of the poore by the distribution of moneye collected at Ember Fasts and Communion days, into which church-treasury, or poore man's box, he himself cast his own offering.'<sup>1</sup>

That the good Rector's relations with his 'brethren' the clergy were of the kindest there is abundant evidence. Our Manuscript makes his bearing in this a text for praising his HUMILITY. 'For his humility,' (so it runs,) 'if not the fairest yet the sweetest flower in the garland of Christian virtues and graces—it was very observable in his general deportment and carriage towards all men with whom he had occasion to converse, *especially those of his own ranke*: amongst whom—notwithstanding his own great abilities—there was none so meanly qualified but if he found in him any disposition to fidelity and diligence in the office of the ministry, he would treat him, not as an inferiour but an equall; not only in private familiaritie, wherein his conversation was both friendly, free, and ingeniously facetious, but likewise in publike observance, it being his ordinary use not only to be a constant auditor at other men's sermons, without discovering any difference that he had made between the person's preaching, but likewise to take notes of their sermons himself, encouraging others by his own example to esteem what they heard, well worthy of their heedfull attention. He had not—as too many have—"the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons," (James ii. 1,) which is especially forbidden by St James, but valued the Word of God as His Word for its own sake, (1 Thes. ii. 13;) and he made account of the ministers of Christ as "stewards of the mysteries of God, esteeming them very highly in love for their worke sake," as the apostle Paul enjoyned the Corinthians and Thessalonians to doe, (1 Cor. iv. 1, and 1 Thes. v. 12, 13;) the want of which equal indifferency is taxed by St Paul in the Corinthians, not only as an evidence of their carnality and babe-like want of spirituall strength and growth in grace, but likewise as a great cause and occasion of those divisions that were amongst them, (1 Cor. iii. 1, &c.,) "while one said I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos;" yea, the sharp contention which happened to be between Paul himself and Barnabas, and grew to such a height that "they departed asunder one from the other," (Acts xv. 36, &c.,) arose from Paul's dislike of John, surnamed Mark, whom Barnabas determined to take with them, having formerly been minister unto them both (Acts xiii. 5.) A dangerous thing it is for any that themselves are embassadours for Christ, to slight or shew any want of respect to others who are employed in the same office with them: the people will quickly take notice of it, and easily learn to doe the like by all. It was prudent as well as religious advise that one, who himself was afterward a reverend prelate in our

<sup>1</sup> See Introduction to Lady Harley's 'Letters,' as before, for details on these Ember Fasts, and a curious 'license' from Pierson to her to 'eat flesh on fast-days, by reason of her great weakness,' (pp. xlviij-viii.)

Church, gave to all of that order then: *Clerum vestrum compellate comiter, excipite familiariter, ut qui vos noveritis dignitate patres, fratres ministerio*: "Intreat your clergie kindly, use them familiarly, as knowing yourselves to be fathers in dignity, brethren in service,"—which, had it been well observed and practised, peradventure might have been a means to prevent that confusion which was brought upon a famous, flourishing Church, by the extirpation of that order which might have defended as well as adorned it.'

One other public service PIERSON rendered, which indeed was but the extension of his own more local efforts—viz., 'he had a hand in that pious business of the London Feoffees to buy out Impropriations, that able and godly ministers might be placed and maintained in them.' I have told the story of the planning and marring of this beneficent scheme in my *Life of DR RICHARD SIBBES*, and thither I refer my readers. But inasmuch as every ray of light on such a historical proceeding is helpful, I place in an Appendix the account given in our MS. It confirms our verdict on Laud's pestiferous interference.<sup>1</sup> I assume that our Worthy aided in raising funds, and otherwise seconding the devoted Clerics and laics who set the work a-going, only to fetch down upon them rebuke and persecution.

We must now look at our Rector in his own Parish, and engaged in ordinary duties. As a 'Preacher' and as a 'Pastor' he manifested rare skill in knowing when to speak and when to be silent; specially when a 'word' would be 'in season.' 'His wisdom,' recurring once more to our 'Notice' writer, 'did most clearly shew itself in his words: "The tongue of the just [is] as choice silver, and a word fitly spoken is like to apples of gold in pictures of silver." Those apophthegms that proceeded out of his mouth witness it.' The specimens of his 'words' thus characterised must have been ill selected, and must have lost in the telling—*e.g.*, 'Speaking of the methods of preaching [he] say'd that doctrine without application is like to a point without dagges,' which being interpreted, seems to mean that there is no use in having a dagger if you don't thrust with it, merely decking it with tassels. Again:—"Preaching upon this text, Mat. v. 13, "Ye are the salt of the earth," [he] took occasion to reprove the corruption of the clergy thus: a bad taylor may make a good botcher [that is, "patcher," or mender]; a sorry shoemaker a good cobler; but an evill minister is good for nothing at all.' Once more:—"In a sermon of sinne and the sad consequences of it [he] sayd, "Sinne is the great make-bate [= a stirrer up of strife, the opposite of 'make-peace'] between God and a people;" and speaking at another time of the true and genuine character of God's servants, say'd that "all God's servants be in ordinary, not retayners." Again:—"Mr Pierson's moderation [was not] seen only in matters of publike concernment but of private also. As he would not with too much remissness strengthen the hands of the wicked that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life—which God complaineth of and threateneth by his prophet (Ezek. xiii. 22)—so, neither would he with too much rigour "breake the bruised reed, or quench the smoaking flax," nor "make the heart of the righteous sad whom God had not made sad," by loading them with "heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne," as the lawyer did, against whom our Saviour upon that account denounceth a woe. "Some men hang salvation on so high a pinne that many poore soules can never reach it," was a speech which he often would repeat as used by Mr Perkins, of whom it was observed that in his older age he alter'd his voice, and remitted much of his former rigidnesse, often professing that to preach mercy was the proper office of the minister of the Gospel.' Further:—"Nor is

<sup>1</sup> Appendix A., p. 18.

y<sup>e</sup> choise of matter only, but of method also, a considerable point of ministerial fidelity. *Ut jam nunc dicat jam nunc debentia dici, pleraque differat, et præsens in tempus omittat*, They that may not be time-servers must yet notwithstanding be observers of times, and consider which are the most opportune and seasonable for the business of religion and the works of grace. Some men presume of themselves, as if they were privileged to speak their minds in any matter as they list, *quicquid in buccam venerit*, without any respect had to persons, times, or places; but he was not such.' Of this a very *pat* instance is given:—'A yong gent[leman] wearing his haire extraordinary long, some of his friends, well-affected to religion, and tender of his good, intreated Mr Pierson to deal with him about it: whose answer was to this effect, "Let him alone till God renew his heart, and then he will reforme his haire himself." Where grace is not inwardly rooted in the heart, all outward conformity to precepts and examples of preciseness will rather be apt to make men rest themselves satisfied with their present hypocrisy, and to bring them to be secret atheists in the end, than fit either to entitle them sincere professors, or any way to facilitate the worke of their conversion.'

I have reserved until now, near the close, our Manuscript's Pepys-like delineation of the good Rector's 'daily life.' We have already had a noble interior in the household of Bletso—strange to think that one of these St Johns, later, was the scoffing infidel Bolingbroke, as strange to think of the living Shaftesbury descending from the sceptical Anthony Ashley Cooper (3d Earl.) In this we are given a glimpse of his own golden-lighted home and life. It were to blur the nice lines of the portrait in any way to alter, and so again I leave it complete:—He rose constantly about four of the clocke, unless prevented by sickness, and then he went immediately to his study till five: then he called up his servants, and thereupon he and his house, Joshua-like, served the Lord. When, after the reading of a psalme, a short but fitting explication being given, he prayed, the heads of his last sermon being therein repeated. The duty being ended, his servants tooke their breakfast, and after betooke themselves to their labour, receiving directions from their master. And he, for the space of an hour or thereabouts, betooke himself, for the exercise of his body and the preservation of his health, to the cutting, cleaving, or sawing of wood, wherein he had very excellent skill in proving all the parts thereof to the best for the future uses. Then, after this corporeal exercise, he returned to the study till almost dinner-time. After dinner, before the returning of thanks, he, like another St Austin, had a chapter read out of the New Testament, and that not only at his own table, but also at his servants, and that in the midst of harvest. After dinner he betooke himself to his former recreation, or in the summer to y<sup>e</sup> fields for a short time, and then to his study till supper-time. After supper, Divine worship with his family, when a chapter being read and briefly expounded, to the duty of prayer, then he and his family went to their rest.'

'He spent one evening exercise in the weeke in catechising of his house. He spent the Lord's day wholly in the duties of piety and charity, excepting only the workes of cogent necessity. By such continual dropping he watered as well as planted, and God gave him such a plentiful increase that he had the happiness to be not only a guide of the blind, a light of them which were in darkness; an instructor of the foolish, and a teacher of babes, as the apostle speaketh, (Romans ii. 19, 20,) but a teacher of teachers, and a builder up of them that should build up others.' Then 'He was not *vir bonus* only, but likewise *commune bonum*, and as a "good steward of the manifold grace of God," did minister as himself had received the gifts of wisdom and knowledge and utterance, not

sparingly, but bountifully, not grudgingly or of necessity, but as a cheerful giver,' (2 Cor. ix. 6, 7.) Further, elsewhere, 'a liberall-minded and free-hearted man he was, not only to devise liberal things as the prophet Isaiah (xxxii. 8) declareth such a one, but likewise to performe the doing of it, which the apostle requireth of the Corinthians, (2 Cor. viii. 11.) Notwithstanding his means was in comparison but small, some three-score pounds per annum or thereabouts, [= to perhaps about £250 now,] yet his hospitality was great, not only in relief of the poor and those that were in need, but likewise in the entertainment of strangers: provident frugality and discreet disposition maintaining a more constant current from a little spring than riotous disorder or careless negligence is usually supplied with from great revenues.'

Our little life-story is well-nigh told. Thus the 'good man' lived, 'serving his generation' as one of whom it might as truly be said as it was of Hananiah, 'he was a faithful man, and feared God above many,' (Nehemiah vii. 2.) In his end he got what he wished. 'Visiting an old gentleman, his ancient friend and acquaintance, who had layn bed-ridden for some time, being unable to help himself, he [Pierson] spoke these words to another friend then present, at their going forth, "I desier that I may live no longer than I may be serviceable to my God,"' and, adds our Manuscript, 'he had his request of God; for his deathbed sickness was not a fortnight.' He died on October 16th, 1633, 'either in or very neer unto the grand climacterical year of his age, 63.' He left behind him a widow, of whom there are incidental notices in Lady Brilliana Harvey's 'Letters' as noted in Appendix.<sup>1</sup> She continued in the closest and tenderest intimacy with the Harley family, and must have won the love and veneration of her admirable husband's successors, as she had of the Parishioners. In his Will, Pierson remembered his native county of Cheshire—especially Northwich, and otherwise 'devised,' in his circumstances, 'liberal things.' I give details in our Appendix.<sup>2</sup>

Our Worthy does not appear to have published anything; for 'Excellent Encouragements' was posthumous. In our Manuscript, mention is made and a copy given of a sermon on 'Care,' which seems to have served its end unto his widow; but I have not traced it in print. The Notice-writer thus speaks of it: 'I will not say that this worthy person had the spirit of prophecy in a strict sense; yet his little tract entituled, "A Cure against Carkinge Cares," dedicated to his loving wife, proved a prophecy to her, by the sad events when her dwelling-house at Brampton-Brian was burnt, and the whole town lay'd desolate in the late warres,—the 'sad events' herein hinted at having long since taken their place in History. Further, 'The ensuing Sermon, entituled the Cure of hurtful Cares and Fears,' represents a specimen of the constant tenor of the most excellent, intellectual, and spiritual method of preaching the everlasting Gospel, and making known the joyful sound of eternal salvation, which was the continual practice in the observance of every Lord's day, by Mr Thomas Pierson, during his ministry, for more than twenty years in Brampton-Brian. The text is Philippians iv. 6, 'Be careful for nothing,' &c. 'Reasons' are given, from which I cull these few words:—

1. Every child of God hath a heavenly Father that careth for him; and so his own worldly carking care is needless, (1 Pet. v. 7.)

2. Worldly care is very disgraceful to a Christian, arguing either their shameful ignorance of

<sup>1</sup> Appendix B., p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix C., pp. 19, 20.



God's Providence, or else their great weakness, if not their total want of true faith, in God, through Jesus Christ.

3. Worldly care is a great burden to the soul; not only vain and unprofitable, but also exceedingly hurtful.<sup>1</sup>

Of 'Excellent Encouragements,' the volume herewith reprinted, the 'Epistles Dedicatory' of CHRISTOPHER HARVEY, which will be found in their respective places—viz., prefixed to the complete volume, and to the 'Notes' on 85th Psalm,<sup>2</sup>—attest his high estimate. Without his bias of personal affection, the 'Expositions' of these four Psalms will be pronounced valuable by every one who has really studied them. They are somewhat mediæval scholastic in their form, but the learning is genuine: the thinking independent, the exegesis as a whole accurate, the exposition true, the insight keen, the teaching sound, the practical truth 'weighty and powerful,' some of the sentences such as stick to the memory, the informing spirit gracious and delicate. As a book in the market it has hitherto been rare and costly when known; wherever known speedily sold on appearing at Sale or in Catalogue.

And so it has been given to us to recall to mind the good Rector of Brampton-Brian. He has long gone to his account and reward. 'The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance,' (Ps. cxxii. 6.) Ay, and the holy fame of Eternity far outweighs that of quick-vanishing Time and narrow Earth. Nevertheless, as we turn to the fine old tome, and out of it fetch 'Excellent Encouragements' let us be grateful—

'Now his faith, his works, his ways,  
Nights of watching, toilsome days,  
Borne for Christ, 'tis meet we praise.'—[*Paradisus Animæ.*]

ALEXANDER B. GROSART.

LIVERPOOL.

<sup>1</sup> The Sermon is a full one, extending from page 43 to 83 of the (quarto) MS.

<sup>2</sup> With reference to this Dedication to Sir Robert Whitney, it may be noted that the poet of the Synagogue named one of his sons 'Whitney Harvey.' Cf. Herbert's Works, as before, Vol. ii., pp. 289-292.

## APPENDIX.

### A.—THE FEOFFEEES OF IMPROPRIATIONS. Page xvi.

The following is the account *in extenso* of this matter from our Manuscript :—

He had, moreover, a hand in that pious business of the London Feoffees to buy out Impropriations, that able and godly ministers might be placed and maintained in them.

It is here requisite to represent what was the pious, religious design of those called the London Feoffees to buy out Impropriations. In the times of anti-Christian idolatry and Papall tyranny the Popes usurped an authority to annex unto the Popish monasteries and convents parochial benefices, not only with power to dispose of the rectories and incumbencies respectively, but further, the Pope gave authority to the severall religious houses—as they were called—to appropriate to the benefit of those convents the tythes and profits of the severall parishes, whereby the maintenance of the ecclesiasticall ministers of all those parishes were wholly aliened from the parishes, and settled upon and enjoyed by monasteries and convents, as the Popes pleased. This was the case and condition of the generality of the ecclesiasticall benefices throughout England. When the Abbeys and Religious Houses were, by Act of Parliament, in the time of King Henry the Eighth, settled upon and annexed to the Crown of England, [they] accordingly were sold indifferently to any purchaser. By these means a sufficient maintenance for a Gospell preaching ministry was utterly deprived in very many places of the kingdome, and no capacity left in the parishes to obtaine a supply for the maintenance of persons able and sufficient to discharge the ministerial function of the Gospell preachers. This being the sad case almost over all England, it pleased God to put it into the hearts of many pious Christians, especially such as lived about London, to endeavour to obtain, through the blessing of God, a happy remedy. Upon serious, religious, and loyall consideration of what is before mentioned, many able and worthy persons summed up their thoughts to this point—that is, to chuse an equall number of reverend Divines, of worthy Lawyers, of Gentlemen, and of Citizens, who should be Feoffees, intrusted with the receiving and managing all charitable benevolences for the purchasing of Impropriations, which might be by sale and purchase obtained in any part of England, the profits of all to be employed for the maintenance of godly preaching ministers, where such were destitute. But to give this a legall, nominall title or fund, it was primarily called the Feoffees for the maintenance of the Lecturers of St Antholine's, London. This Christian design was applauded and embraced over all England, as being a most hopefull project to promote the glory of God in bringing “life and immortality to light by the Gospell” in such places as sate in the region and shadow of death. Nor could there justly be imputed any shadow of prejudice to the government of the Church of England; for not any person could be allowed to preach as a Lecturer in any place whatsoever, without the license of the respective diocessans. Notwithstanding all the forementioned Christian and pious reasons, the fury and rage of Archbishop Land and his complices prevailed in the Star-Chamber to divest the Feoffees of their rightfull purchased possession of severall Impro-

private Tythes, and to seize upon them to the King's use. But in the Parliament commenced 1640 the Lords assembled in Parliament reversed the proceedings in the Star-Chamber against the Feoffees; which judgment of the Lords was confirmed by Act of Parliament (which confirmed former judicial proceedings) upon the Restauration of King Charles the Second. This is the true representation of that most pious project, religiously begun but most wickedly defeated and frustrated.' Cf. my Memoir of Dr Sibbes, Works, Vol. i. pp. lxxiii-lxxx; also, to see how your High-Churchmen can pervert simple matters of fact, and spit upon names of his own Church the most venerable and illustrious, 'Simony. In two Parts. Part the First, Its History and Effects. Part the Second, Some Account of the Puritan Feoffees, A.D. 1622, and of the Simeon Trustees, A.D. 1836. By William Downes Willis, M.A., Prebendary of Wells and Rector of Elsted, Sussex. Second edition, revised and enlarged. 1865. 8vo. (Rivingtons).'

#### B.—LETTERS OF LADY HARLEY. Page xviii.

Under date 'Nov. 30th 1638,' in writing her 'deare some Mr Edward Harley,' as to sending certain household provisions, 'a coold pye or such a thinge,' she says, 'Mrs Pirson tells me when her sonne was at Oxford, and shee sent him such thinges, he prayed her that shee would not' (page 13.) This refers to her 'sonne' by her former husband, probably to 'Christopher.' Under 'January 19th 1638,' she writes, 'Mrs Pirson is still ill' (page 22.) Again onward, 'Mrs Pirson has quited her ague' (page 26.) Further on, 'Mrs Pirson is so well that she goes abroode' (page 29.) Still later, 'May 7, 1642,' one is mentioned as 'borded at Mrs Pirson's' (page 158.) The Editor of these Letters was unaware that Mrs Pierson was also the widow of Harvey of Bumbury. In an earlier 'Letter' to her husband Sir Robert, Lady H. adds a second *P.S.*, 'I pray you remember me to Mr Pirson. I thanke God all at his howes are well.' July 7th 1628.

#### C.—LEGACIES OF PIERSON. Page xviii.

'He left, at his death, a competent estate, wherewith to give evidence of his thankfulness to some unto whom he had formerly been beholding, and to manifest his care for others in future promotion and perpetuall propagation of learning and religion. At Northwich, in Cheshire, there being a Free Schoole, where first he was brought up to learning, he in his lifetime had taken care that there should be a place fitted for a library, which he furnished with some bookes, such as he then thought convenient for the use of the school-masters and scholars; and at his death he bequeathed twenty poundes' worth of bookes more unto the same school, partly in divinity, partly in humanity, for the benefit of the preachers and schoolmasters there. Four poundes' worth of bookes more he gave to y<sup>e</sup> Free Schoole at Kingston in Herefordshire, founded by the Honourable the Lady Margeret Hawkins, relict of the famous seaman, Sir John Hawkins, and one of the Ladies of Queen Elizabeth's bed-chamber. One MS. of the Prior of Berlington, entitled *Comptatio Patrum*, for which he had been offered twenty poundes, he bequeathed to the publick library of the University of Cambridge; and another MS., a libel, [libellum?] of a large quarto, to the library of Hereford. Most of his library besides, which was farre better than is usuall amongst private country ministers, he left in trust with some of his friends, to be left unto thirteen of his acquaintance, neighbour ministers, during their continuance in those places where then they were settled, and whither by his means especially they had been brought. To the poore of y<sup>e</sup> parish of Brompton, [Brampton,] and others of the next adjoining parishes, he bequeathed severall summes of money, to be put to their severall stocks, besides what he gave unto particular persons, to the value of an hundred poundes and upwards. He likewise, by his Will, gave order for the raising of three hundred poundes out of his personall estate, whereof he directed fifty poundes to be bestowed for the better maintenance of a preacher at Northwich aforesaid, where first he himself had been employed in the office of the ministry. And two hundred and fifty poundes thereof he directed to be employed

towards the perpetuall maintenance of a preacher at Whitley Chappell, in the county of Chester ; which, having been long before demolished, and almost quite worn out of memory, was built by Mr William Tucket, Lord of the Manor and one of them by whose liberality chiefly Mr Pierson in his youth had been maintained at Cambridge. In gratefull remembrance whereof, Mr Pierson was not only very forward and diligent upon all occasions to doe all the good offices he could for Mr Tucket's posterity ; but, likewise, the aforesaid chappell being againe through neglect gone to decay, he did himself bestow some charge for the repaire thereof, and for the space of divers years before his death, allowed six pounds per annum towards the maintenance of a preacher there, whose entertainment he did not only by his persuasion excite, but likewise by his example encourage and assist others unto.'

I am sorry to say, that inquiries at Whitley and elsewhere shew that these 'Legacies' of Pierson have been absorbed by some private parties to the wrong of the legatees—one instance out of very many similar that, in the prosecution of these biographical researches, I have come on, involving large amounts, and demanding investigation, exposure, and redress. Bishop Gastrell in his 'Notitia' notices Pierson's legacies to Whitley, and complains that even then they were inoperative.

A. B. G.

TO THE HONOURABLE

S I R   R O B E R T   R I C H,

KNIGHT OF THE BATH, AND SON AND HEIR TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE ROBERT  
LORD RICH; AND TO THE HONOURABLE AND VIRTUOUS  
LADY, THE LADY FRANCES RICH, HIS WIFE,

S. S. WISHETH ALL TRUE COMFORT IN THIS LIFE, AND ETERNAL HAPPINESS IN THE LIFE TO COME.

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IT is credibly reported, Right Honourable, that when one presented unto Antipater, King of Macedon, a treatise of happiness, that he rejected it with this answer: I am not at leisure. Your Honour shall find this a treatise tending to happiness, and shewing the way to everlasting blessedness. Yet I assure myself it shall find better entertainment at your Honourable hands, and that you will find leisure at your leisure to peruse and read it. I must ingeniously confess that many have divers times handled many points of doctrine delivered in this treatise, yet have done it after another method. If the water I have drawn from this well shall delight you, I hope it will not taste the worse being brought unto you in this vessel. I offer here unto your view the Anatomy of David's Blessed Man; or, A Short Exposition of the First Psalm, directing a man how he may be truly blessed. It is not without desert that St Jerome doth call this book of the Psalms the treasure of learning; for out of it most frequent testimonies are brought by our blessed Saviour himself. And this first Psalm is a compend, or an abstract, of the whole book of Psalms, directing to true happiness. The text, I am sure, is excellent for the purpose: but for my manner of handling it, I leave it to the censure of God's church. In preaching, I have ever

counted plainness the best eloquence, and the carriage of matters so that those of the lowest form may learn somewhat, the soundest and the surest learning. For surely we are so fallen into the dregs of time, which, being the last, must needs be worst, that security hath so possessed all men that they will not be awaked. But if at any time the word of God, or any good motion of God's Spirit, hath met with them, presently security whispers them in the one ear, that though it be fit to think of such things, yet it is not yet time. Youth pleads a privilege, though many millions of young men are in hell for want of timely repentance; and presumption warrants them in the other ear that they may have time hereafter. And thus men spend their days, until at last their hour-glass be run, and time then is past. Now, if your Honour shall lay this to heart in the strength of years, it shall be your chiefest wisdom. And if to be religious in all ages hath been held to be true honour, how much more honourable is it in so impious an age? It is religion and godliness that shall embalm your name, and make it shine before men, and glorify your soul amongst angels. May her box of ointment shall never be forgotten. For godliness hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come, and without it is no internal comfort to be found in conscience,

nor external peace to be looked for in this world, nor eternal happiness to be hoped for in the next. Now, how can religion but promise to herself a zealous patron of your Honour, being the son and heir of so gracious and religious a father, who hath shewed himself a faithful door-keeper in the house of God? Let his godly example teach you not to drink of those stolen waters, or rather indeed the blood of souls, wherewith too many in these gold-thirsty days do purchase Aceldama unto them and theirs. The Lord keep this ever from the purpose of heart in his servants, who have so honourable and weighty a trust committed unto them! Let this exhortation of David to his son Solomon be ever in your honourable mind: And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind.

For the Lord searcheth all hearts, and he understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.' The God of heaven so vouchsafe to water you and yours with the dew of heaven, that, with the godly man in this psalm, you may prosper as trees of his planting; and so bring forth fruit in due season in this life, that at the end of this life your reward may be the beginning of this psalm, even true blessedness! Thus, in all dutiful humility, I rest,

Your Honour's remembrancer  
To the Throne of Grace,

SAMUEL SMITH.

PRITTLEWELL, *this 26th of March 1635.*

## TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

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CHRISTIAN READER, as it hath ever been the practice of wicked men to make their prosperity an argument of God's favour, reasoning after this manner: Is it likely that I should enjoy so many blessings from God, if my conversation were not pleasing in his sight? &c.; not considering that these common gifts are given alike both to the godly man and to the sinner, and that Esau, though he was a man hated of God, yet enjoyed the fatness of the earth as well as Jacob;—

So the children of God, beholding the outward prosperity of the wicked, and their own miserable condition here in this life, have hereby been much troubled; and have been moved to call God's judgments into question, how it could stand with his justice that wicked men should so abound in wealth, that rebelliously transgress. This proved a sore temptation unto David, insomuch that his steps had well-nigh slipped. And the same thing perplexed the prophet Jeremiah, that he was bold even to reason the case with God, saying, Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? and why are they

in wealth that rebelliously transgress? Many of God's servants are not a little affected herewith, not understanding the reason how the Lord will not suffer his children in this life to go unchastised for their sins, but thereby brings them to a greater measure of humiliation. As for the wicked, the prophet assigneth a reason of their prosperity,—namely this, 'that thou mayest pull them out like beasts for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of destruction.' This truth is most clearly set down in the thirty-seventh Psalm, a portion whereof I have handled in the sermon following. My desire herein is to comfort God's people, that notwithstanding their present condition may seem to be miserable, yet the Lord doth ever uphold his in time of greatest danger, and of this they shall be sure, that their latter end shall be peace. I wish thee comfort by it, and by all other holy helps. And so remain,

Thine in every Christian office,

SAMU. SMITH.





# A SHORT VIEW AND METHOD OF THE FIRST PSALM, FOLLOWED IN THIS EXPOSITION.

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<p>The Psalm hath in it two parts.</p>	<p>1. A description of all mankind divided into two ranks, ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.</p>	<p>1. Godly, ver. 1, 2, described two ways.</p>	<p>1. By their virtues, which are of two sorts.</p>	1. Negative, which are three.	{	1. <i>He doth not walk in.</i>	2. <i>He doth not stand in.</i>	3. <i>He doth not sit in, &amp;c.</i>										
				<p>2. Wicked, who are likewise described two ways.</p>	<p>2. Affirmative, which are three likewise.</p>	<p>1. By a similitude, by a Tree.</p>	<p>Described.</p>	<p>2. By the prosperous success of all he doth.</p>	<p>{</p>	<p>1. <i>He meditates much.</i></p>	<p>2. <i>The object of his meditation, The law of God.</i></p>	<p>3. <i>The time, Day and night.</i></p>						
													<p>1. By their estate in this lifetwo ways.</p>	<p>2. By their estate and condition in the life to come, two ways.</p>	<p>1. Generally, <i>It is not so with them.</i></p>	<p>2. Particularly, <i>But as the chaff which the wind, &amp;c.</i></p>	<p>1. <i>They shall not stand in judgment.</i></p>	<p>2. <i>Neither be associates with the just.</i></p>



# SAMUEL SMITH ON PSALM I.

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**VER. 1.** *Blessed is the man that doth not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

Concerning the book of the Psalms, it is an epitome of the whole Bible, teaching us what we are to believe and do both to God and man; in which we may, as in a glass, most clearly behold the nature of almighty God, his wisdom, goodness, and mercy towards his church and children; as also most notable spectacles of his fearful wrath and vengeance against the wicked and ungodly.

If men would learn to pray unto God, and crave for any mercy and blessing at his hands, lo, here be excellent platforms of true, hearty, and earnest prayers. If men would give thanks for blessings received, or for judgments escaped, or for deliverance from wicked and ungodly men, here be most worthy examples and directions. Again, if men would find comfort in temptation, trouble, and affliction, and learn with patience to bear them, there is no part of the Bible more sweet and comfortable than this book of the Psalms. And therefore it should be our delight and study, and we ought to spend the more time in the reading and in the meditating of so excellent and worthy a book.

This psalm is set down before the rest as a preface to stir up every faithful Christian to the diligent and careful study of the holy Scriptures, and the blessed book of God, as our Saviour saith: 'Search the Scriptures,' &c.; because that will bring a man to true happiness in the end—namely, to know God to be his God, to know Jesus Christ,

to know himself, and to direct him in the narrow way which leadeth unto life eternal.

This first Psalm is set down without any inscription, and therefore it is uncertain by whom it was penned; whether by David, as most like it was, or by Esdras, who is rather thought to have gathered them together, and joined them thus in one volume or book, as now we have them.

This psalm doth teach us these two worthy points—namely, how the godly man lives and walks in this world, what manner of life he leads on earth, and also what happiness and blessedness is reserved for him in the life to come in heaven, ver. 1, 2, 3. The second part shews the contrary life of the wicked and ungodly, as also what fearful vengeance and eternal judgments are prepared for them, ver. 4, 5.

And the parts of this psalm are two: in the former part is a description of the contrary estate of the godly man and the wicked man—namely, that the godly man is certainly blessed, and the wicked man cursed, in the five first verses. The other part shews the chief cause of the happiness of the one, and the misery of the other: ver. 6, 'Because God knoweth,'—that is, likes, loves, and allows, yea, doth bless and prosper the way of the one, but he hates, abhors, and dislikes the way of the other; and God doth curse it, and make it most unhappy and miserable unto them. So that we see the sum of this psalm is this, that those are blessed whose way, that is, whose life and conversation, the Lord loves, likes, and allows of, so as he doth direct and bless it; but the Lord allows and

takes care of the way of the righteous and godly man, therefore the godly man is blessed.

Now seeing this is the main proposition of this psalm, to prove that the godly are blessed; therefore the prophet doth first shew who be truly godly, as ver. 1, 2, and then wherein their blessedness doth consist, ver. 3.

The godly man is described two ways: first, Negatively, shewing what he doth carefully shun and avoid, ver. 1; secondly, Affirmatively, shewing what he doth carefully embrace and follow, ver. 2.

Concerning the things which the godly man doth ever carefully shun and avoid, they are here laid down to be three in number, by a most excellent kind of speech, laid down by way of graduation, wherein the prophet shews how men proceed by degrees to be wicked; for there is an increase and proceeding in sin, as we may see in every step of this graduation: first, In the persons; secondly, In the manner; and thirdly, In the fruit itself.

And indeed there is a variety and multiplicity of sins; and as they are divers, and of divers kinds, so the variety of number causeth a diversity of names: 'The counsel of the wicked,' 'the way of sinners,' 'the seat of the scornful.' For as one saith well, There is a fruitful crop of sin, and there is none of the sons of Adam but may say with Manasses in his prayer, 'I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea.'

First, He doth not 'walk in the counsel of the wicked;' where we see the persons are said to be *wicked*, the original word signifieth a man that is never quiet, but ever thinking or doing something that is evil, like the raging sea, whose mind is ever troubled and tempted with evil thoughts and perturbations. By *counsel* he understandeth here the crafts and subtleties of the wicked, by which they push themselves forward, and labour to draw others to the like, according to that of Solomon; 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, come, let us lay wait for blood,' &c., Prov. i. 10. So that the prophet meaneth here, that he is blessed that joineth not himself to commit sin with the ungodly, nor by himself doth commit the same as sinners do.

The second sort of evil men whose company he doth avoid are called *sinners*: the word signifies

such as not only are of a naughty heart, and, being seduced by bad counsel, live in sin, but such as delight in sin, and have in them a constant and settled purpose to live in sin.

The third sort of evil men whose company he doth avoid are called *scorners*. And they are such kind of wicked men as, being hardened in heart, do still confirm themselves in their wicked life, and get such a habit and custom in sin, that they shame not to make a mock of God and all godliness, and even to bear out the tongue at religion and Christian piety; so that as they are wicked in heart and lewd in life, so be they also hardened and confirmed in both of them; for by *seat* he noteth the fellowship and society with the ungodly.

Secondly, concerning the action, the first is, To '*walk* in the counsel of the wicked.' To walk is to live and frame his life to affect and approve of the ways and counsels of wicked men; neither will he once listen or lend his ear to the perverse and naughty counsel of ungodly men, much less will he be brought to frame his life after their wicked ways.

The second action or proceeding of a sinner is *standing*; as the former is in heart to like, love, and approve of the ways of the wicked, this is to obey them and follow them into the same excess of riot. So that the meaning of the prophet is, that a godly man doth not like, love, nor follow that kind of life or conversation which wicked men do use, and such as be given to sin—according to that of the apostle, 'Fashion not yourselves like unto the world,' Rom. xii. 2—but doth by all means possibly shun and avoid it.

The third evil, which the godly man doth most carefully avoid, is in these words, and 'hath not sat in the assembly of the scorners;' that is, will not be familiar and have acquaintance with such as be mockers of God and all good duties; he will not be their companion, nor keep them company, who do openly profess impiety, who make a scoff at religion, scorn the word of God, and contemn the servants of God. These be the three evils which the godly man doth most carefully shun and avoid.

In the whole we may observe the wonderful growth that sin hath in the heart of a sinner; it stands not at a stay, but is ever growing, and never

suffers any winter-tide of blasting, but ever prospers. It first beginneth in the heart of the sinner with a double walking, wandering, as it were, up and down, as being uncertain what to do: the next step that it maketh is from walking to standing, which signifies a determination after the former uncertainty, and where sin is not stayed neither in the conception nor in the birth, 'When it is finished it brings forth death,' James i. 15, ever ending in hardness of heart, obstinacy of mind, and obduracy of both. Oh that all wicked and ungodly men would lay this to heart, that making once shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, and wounding their souls by sin, this spiritual disease of sin grows daily to be more incurable, and the more sin groweth to a head the more the Spirit of God is quenched in a man, and the work of grace is diminished. It behoves us all, therefore, to keep a diligent watch over our own ways, to cut off the occasions of sin, and to slay the beginnings of iniquity: for a fire new kindled may easily be quenched; when the ship begins to leak it may easily be stopped; and at the first, sin and Satan may easily be resisted, and we may with the less difficulty withstand the force of it, whereas the more it is practised the more the heart is hardened, and sin grows stronger, and the sinner himself weaker, according to that of the prophet, 'Can the blackmoor change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, which are accustomed to do evil,' Jer. xiii. 23. And therefore to this end the Lord laboured with Cain to stop his sin in the conception, or at least in the birth, when that he saw that his countenance was cast down, and that he had conceived some evil against his brother, the Lord tells Cain, 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be rewarded? if thou doest evil, sin lieth at the door,' *q. d.* Cain, Cain, be warned betimes ere it be too late; there is a reward that will follow thy righteous dealing, but if thou go on to kill thy righteous brother, thou shalt find that thy condition will be far worse than now it is. This is the woeful and miserable condition of those that run from evil to worse, as it were, adding drunkenness to thirst, and be a warning unto us to take heed lest at any time we give any entertainment to sin, and so our 'last end be worse than the first,' Mat. viii.

In the second verse the prophet describes a golly

man affirmatively, shewing what he doth most carefully embrace and follow. And as if he should say, He is a blessed man that abstains from evil, if so be withal he delight to do good, so he do willingly yield himself to perform obedience unto the will of God, and conform all his thoughts, words, and deeds to the will of God.

Now the good things which he must do are contained in two words: first, 'His delight must be in the law of the Lord;': secondly, He must 'meditate therein day and night.'

*But his delight*,—that is, the godly and upright man, who is truly happy and blessed indeed, doth wonderfully love the law of the Lord, that is, the word of God, and that heavenly doctrine wherein is revealed the will of God, whereunto all our thoughts, words, and works must be conformed, and which maketh known unto us the way to eternal life and salvation.

Secondly, *In this law he meditates day and night*,—that is, the godly man doth set his heart and mind upon the word and doctrine of God, so as he doth think often, and much muse upon it; it is his daily meditation, so as he sets some time apart every day to study it,—both to learn out of it how God must be purely worshipped, his own life ordered; as also to learn thereby how to maintain and keep faith and a good conscience before God and man. And thus the godly man is described by both parts of his life, his eschewing of evil, and his careful and religious performing of good duties.

Secondly, We have seen a godly man described, so now followeth wherein the happiness of this man consists.

This happy man is described two ways.

First, By a similitude.

Secondly, By the prosperous and good success of all he doth.

The happiness of the godly man is described by a similitude, whereby a godly man is compared to a tree, which tree is described,

First, By the place—namely, that it is a tree *planted*, not of its own growing. *By the water's side*; even by the fresh and springing rivers, which is a resemblance of our ingrafting into Jesus Christ by faith, and the Spirit of God; so as we receive and draw juice and nourishment from him continually.

Secondly, It is described by an effect—namely, that it *brings forth fruit in due season*; and this is a resemblance of our regeneration, or of our obedience, because the godly man, being ingrafted into Jesus Christ, doth by virtue of his resurrection bring forth the fruit of faith and obedience both to God and man. In due season, that is, in time convenient, when it may best seem for the glory of God and the good of our neighbour.

Thirdly, By a contrary property, that *her leaves do not fall*—that is, in time of winter and storms her leaves fall not. And this is a sign of our perseverance, that the godly man is not offended nor daunted with crosses, persecutions, or afflictions, or any other calamity whatsoever, but doth by patience possess his soul, and by faith wades, as it were, throughout all these dangers.

Secondly, The happiness of a godly man is described by that blessed success that God gives to all his affairs he takes in hand. *It shall prosper*, because he takes them in hand according to God's commandment, and in his fear, with prayer and calling on the name of the Lord, Josh. i. 8, to the glory of God and the good of his neighbour.

In the second part of the psalm, the prophet describeth the most miserable and cursed estate of the wicked and ungodly, ver. 4, 5. That it is clean contrary, that as their ways and lives be contrary, so their reward is contrary.

The prophet, describing the cursed and miserable estate of the wicked, saith first, *It is not so with them*,—that is, that wicked and ungodly men are in a far contrary estate and condition; they cannot in any case be compared to a tree that is planted by the rivers of waters, that brings forth her fruit in due season, and whose leaf shall not fall, neither do they prosper in their actions, neither doth God give success unto them.

But he setteth out the cursed and wretched estate of all wicked and ungodly men by a contrary similitude, comparing them to *chaff which the wind drives away*,—that is, even as chaff hath no root in the earth, and wanting all juice and nourishment, must needs be fruitless and dry, so as the wind doth most easily scatter it away; even so the wicked are not rooted nor grounded in Christ, whereby it comes to pass, they being utterly void of all grace of God's

Spirit, that they can bring forth no fruit of good works, neither can they persevere in time of temptation, whereby again it comes to pass that they be carried away with every blast of vain doctrine; and with the least storm of temptation, and blast of adversity, they are tossed to and fro. And when the wind of God's judgments shall blow upon them, they are clean scattered away. This is their estate and condition here in this life.

And for their estate and condition in that to come, the prophet layeth it down likewise, ver. 5, in these words, 'They shall not be able to stand in judgment,'—that is, they shall not be able to stand with comfort before the face of the judge, but shall tremble and quake, as not being able to endure the angry countenance of the judge, Rev. vi. 13.

Neither is this all, but they shall likewise be severed and secluded from the blessed company of the godly. That as here in this life they could not abide a godly man, but did hate him, persecute him, and shun his company, so at the last day, so just shall their reward be, that they shall be separated from them, and as goats cast on the left hand, there to remain for evermore in torments, which are easeless and remediless. 'Neither the sinners in the company of the just,'—that is, in the company of those that be justified and reconciled to God in Jesus Christ, which shall then inherit the kingdom prepared for them.

Hitherto we have opened the first part of the psalm, containing the estate and condition of a godly and a wicked man here in this life, and in the life to come.

Now followeth the second part of the psalm, in the last verse, containing the confirmation of that doctrine; and that our prophet doth by shewing the efficient cause, both of the happiness of the one, and the misery and wretchedness of the other.

The first efficient cause of the happiness of the godly man is in these words, 'Because the Lord knows the way of the righteous,'—that is, he likes, loves, and approves of it, so as he doth direct and bless it: and therefore it shall prosper.

And the cause why the estate of the wicked is unhappy, and their way shall perish, is, because the Lord doth not know their way,—that is, he taketh no delight in the way or in the life of a wicked

man; he loves it not so as he should direct and prosper it: and therefore it shall perish.

And thus much for the meaning of the words; now let us come unto the doctrines.

Ver. 1. *Blessed is the man that hath not, &c.*

*Blessed is the man, or, oh the blessedness of that man, or as it is in the original, 'Oh the blessedness<sup>1</sup> of that man!'* They seem to be the words of a man musing and meditating with himself wherein man's blessedness should consist, as if he should say, Some pronounce him blessed that is in honour; some count them blessed that have abundance of riches, some that live in pleasure; some place it in one thing, some in another. But oh the blessedness of that man that fears the Lord, that is truly religious, of the godly and righteous man!

*Doct. 1.* Hence we learn this doctrine, that, of all men under heaven, the godly man alone is blessed, and the ungodly and wicked man is cursed. The righteous man is a happy man in the sight of God, when the wicked is wretched and miserable. This doctrine is very apparent in the word of God. It is the scope and drift of the whole Scriptures to prove this one point, that the godly man is blessed, and the wicked man is cursed. 'Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, and delighteth in his commandments.' 'Blessed be they that be upright in their way, and walk in the law of the Lord.' 'Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and seek him with their whole heart.' Again, 'Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Blessed is he to whom the Lord imputeth no sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile.' Read the thirty-seventh Psalm, which seemeth to be penned of purpose to confirm the everlasting truth of this doctrine: that the godly are blessed and the wicked are cursed. And this blessedness of theirs doth not reach only to this life, but also to the life to come, according to that of the apostle, 'Godliness hath not only the promise of this life, but also the life to come,' 1 Tim. iv. 8. Yea, if we observe the course which the Spirit of God taketh in the course of the whole Scriptures, it shall make this doctrine so much the more apparent unto us,—that is, that wheresoever there is a com-

fort laid down in the word, the same comfort is still restrained to the godly. As that of the holy apostle St Paul, in the eighth chapter and first verse of his Epistle to the Romans, 'There is no condemnation.' A marvellous comfort to hear that we are freed from that heavy and grievous curse which we had incurred by reason of sin: yet lest the wicked should presume hereby and take it unto themselves, unto whom in nowise it doth belong, the apostle restraineth the comfort in the same verse, 'To them that are in Christ Jesus;' and lest men should deceive themselves, to take this comfort to themselves, unto whom it doth not belong, he marketh them out, as it were, in their foreheads, saying, They are such as 'walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' The like of David, Psalm xv., 'Lord, who shall enter into thy holy tabernacle? &c. He that hath clean hands and a pure heart,' &c.

Besides, none are blessed but such as be in the favour of God, as the prophet David saith, 'In thy favour is life,' such as be reconciled to God in Jesus Christ. As for such as be out of his favour, they be cursed and miserable, be they what they will be. Now, only the godly man that is humbled, that is sanctified, that is born anew, is he alone that is in the favour of God: therefore only the godly man is blessed.

*Object.* Wherein stands the blessedness of God's children, of a godly and a righteous man?

*Answer.* I answer, In this, that a godly man that is humbled for his sins is now reconciled to God, so as God the Father becomes his Father, adopts him to be his child, loves him, and delights in him as his child; 'Behold, what love hath the Father given us, that we should be called the sons of God.' And hereupon come the amiable and love-titles that Christ giveth unto his church, 'Open unto me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled,' Cant. v. 2. Great are the affections of fervent love that parents bear towards their children, which none can express but they that feel; and yet all their love is nothing in comparison of the love of God towards his children; this the prophet teacheth, Isa. xlix. 15, 'Can a woman forget her child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? yet will I not forget thee.'

Another part of the happiness of a godly man doth consist in this, that he hath assurance of the

<sup>1</sup> Query, 'blessednesses'?—Ed.

pardon of his sins, that they are all done away, and shall never be laid to his charge, but are washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ, according to that of the prophet David, Ps. xxxiii. 1, 'Blessed is he whose wickedness is forgiven.'

He hath all his sins, original and actual, with the guilt and punishment belonging unto them, freely and fully forgiven unto him; and all the righteousness of Christ freely and fully imputed unto him; and so God is reconciled unto him, and approveth him as righteous in his sight. And thus the apostle reasoneth, Rom. viii. 33, 'Herein was that love of God made manifest amongst us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is that love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a reconciliation for our sins.'

Another part of the happiness of a godly man doth consist in this, that he hath peace of conscience, whereas the wicked and ungodly man hath a dead and sleepy conscience, or else an accusing conscience: 'There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God,' Isa. lvii. But the godly man that is reconciled to God in Jesus Christ hath the free pardon of all his sins; he hath sweet peace of conscience, which doth not accuse, but excuset him to God; yea, he hath exceeding great joy in the Holy Ghost, that he knoweth his sins are pardoned,<sup>1</sup> according to that of the apostle, 'The kingdom of God standeth not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' And, indeed, whom should he fear, or whereof should he be afraid?<sup>2</sup> God is become his Father; the angels are become his attendants, they pitch their tents round about them, and have a charge of them; the saints of heaven and earth are fellow-brethren; the creatures of almighty God are their friends, yea, their servants, to do them good all their days.

The devils nor all the power of darkness shall not hurt them. For Christ hath spoiled principalities and powers, and hath made show of them openly, and hath triumphed over them upon the cross; yea, that which is more, the Lord Jesus Christ (to whom all judgment is committed) is become their Lord and

Saviour. So that 'they shall never come into condemnation, but shall pass from death unto life,' John v. 24.

Lastly, The godly man is assured that the kingdom of heaven and eternal life belongs unto him, and that he shall be partaker of eternal glory, life, and salvation, and shall live in the presence of God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost for evermore. And this assurance in the godly is no presumption, but faith;<sup>3</sup> for every godly man hath in him the spirit of grace and adoption; and he that hath the spirit of adoption knows that he hath it, and is able through the same spirit to say, 'I live, and Christ liveth in me,' Gal. ii. 20. This was in Job when he said, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' &c. This was in St Paul, 'I am persuaded that neither height nor depth,' &c., Rom. viii. In these and the like privileges stands the happy and blessed estate of God's children.

Use 1. The use of this doctrine is most excellent, for seeing the privileges of God's children are so great and so excellent, that therefore they must needs be most happy and blessed. For howsoever the world account them miserable, grinning at them with their teeth, nodding at them with their heads, hissing at them with their tongues, and every way most contumeliously reproaching them with their words; yet we see here how dear and precious they are with God, and in the reputation of Jesus Christ, who bought them at a price, and redeemed them even with his own blood. 'Behold what love the Father hath given to us that we should be called the sons of God. And for this cause the world knoweth you not, because it knoweth not him.' God is become their Father, the Son their Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost their sanctifier, the angels their attendants, the Scriptures their evidences, and the sacraments seals unto the same: this the apostle teacheth when he saith, 'All things are yours, and ye Christ's, and Christ God's,' 1 Cor. iii. 21. They are blessed then that are thus reconciled to God in Jesus Christ; they are blessed that have their sins pardoned and not imputed unto them; they are blessed that enjoy this sweet peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost; they are blessed that have attained to this assurance that the kingdom of heaven, eternal life,

<sup>3</sup> Non arrogantia est, sed fides, &c.—*Aug.*, *Serm.* viii.

<sup>1</sup> Pax est hæreditas Christianorum.—*Aug. Serm. De Temp.*

<sup>2</sup> Perfecta et absoluta cuiusque excusatio testimonium conscientie suæ.—*Idem.*



and salvation shall be their reward. But the godly man is partaker of all these; what then shall hinder his happiness?

This serveth then to confute three sorts of men: first, The voluptuous man, who placeth his felicity and happiness in delights, pleasures, sports, and pastimes; he loves and likes them above all other things, and most eagerly doth hunt after them. This appeared in that rich man in the Gospel, Luke xii., who bade his soul 'eat, drink, and be merry,' as if there were nothing else to be looked after, or as if man's chief felicity did consist in these things. And this was the case of Solomon in the days of his vanity, until he saw that all was but in vain, Eccles. i. Let us then be careful we be not deceived with these sinful pleasures of this life, as to think therein we are happy; but let us take heed unto this hook of Satan, lest we be taken within his snare. It is written to the everlasting commendation of Moses, Heb. xi. 24, that he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and chose rather to suffer adversity with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the rebuke of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward.<sup>1</sup>

The second sort of men here reproved are the ambitious, that makes honour and preferment their god, as if man's chief felicity did consist in that. This is their care and study, how to climb up to preferment, like Absalom, that sought to steal the hearts of his father's subjects; and Alithophel, that was so proud that he could not endure a man in favour but himself, and therefore, when he saw Hushai's counsel received, and his rejected, went and hanged himself. So proud Haman, Esth. iii. 3, was so vexed with Mordecai, that he could not be quiet till he had wrought his own destruction. And the reason of all is this, prosperity puffeth up and stealeth away the heart of man, making a man both to forget God and himself, and therefore prosperity is a very dangerous and slippery estate; and howsoever it be much desired and admired, yet it is full of dangers, and hedged in with many perils; and howsoever many are drawn away from God through persecution and affliction, yet prosperity is more dangerous, for by it many more are drowned in sensuality, and even lulled asleep in carnal security.

The third sort of men here reproved are the covetous cormorants of the world, such as make god their god, love it and delight in it more than God, as if their chiefest happiness did consist in the multitude of their riches; whereas indeed godliness alone hath the promise of this life and that which is to come. And of all other sins, our Saviour gives this caveat against this sin, saying, 'Take heed and beware of covetousness,' Luke xii. 15. And this is that which the prophet David doth pray against, Ps. exix. 36, when he saith, 'Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness.' Hereunto agreeth that exhortation of the apostle, 'If any man love this world, the love of my Father is not in him.' So then, whether we consider that covetousness is the root of all evil, or that there is a flat opposition between God and the world, we must hold this as an evident truth, that there is no blessedness to be found in them.

*Use 2.* This may seem to prove<sup>1</sup> that cursed, yet common opinion of the world,—namely, that of all men the godly man is most miserable. We see here that the Lord himself doth proclaim from heaven, that he accounteth the godly man a blessed and happy man; but yet the world, that is, wicked men in the world, judge and deem the godly man wretched and miserable. Such a man as truly feareth God hates all iniquity, disliketh lewd company, makes conscience of good duties—as to pray in his family, to instruct his servants and children—is diligent and careful to frequent sermons; this man is an owl amongst birds, hooted at and pointed at; men reproach him, and of all men he is most contemned. But as Paul saith, thus it must be; we are brought upon the stage, we are made a gazing-stock to wicked men, and accounted as dung for Christ's sake.

*Use 3.* This may serve to stop their mouths that say and think it is in vain to serve the Lord, that it is lost labour to be religious, that there is no good got by hearing of sermons and leading of a godly life. It is, and ever hath been, the cursed thought of man's heart to think so, as in the time of the prophet Malachi, 'It is lost labour to serve the Lord; and what good comes there by serving of God?' Mal. iii. 14. So in these days it is clear men think

<sup>1</sup> Query, 'reprove'—Ed.

it is in vain to be religious, to live godly, and in all things to labour to keep faith and a good conscience before God and men.

*Note.*—But it is manifest here that it is not in vain to serve God; nay, it is that alone that brings a man to happiness and true comfort here, and an eternal measure of glory in the world to come. And, withal, this may serve to comfort every poor child of God against all the discomforts and discouragement of the world by Satan and his cursed instruments,—namely, that whatsoever thy estate, be never so poor in this world, and subject to never so many afflictions and troubles, yet if thou be a godly man, certainly then thou art blessed. Thou that art in God's favour, thou that art reconciled to God in Jesus Christ, and hast thy sins and offences pardoned, eternal life belongs unto thee; and therefore fear not, be not any whit discouraged, hold out unto the end; certain it is thou art a blessed man, and in so doing thou shalt have a crown of life.

*Use 4.* Hence we learn, that as many as desire to be truly happy and blessed, may here behold the way to be happy and blessed. Wouldst thou be truly happy and blessed here in this life, and hereafter in the life to come? wouldst be assured that thou art the child of God, in his favour, reconciled unto him in Jesus Christ? wouldst thou be assured of the salvation of thy soul? Oh labour then to become a godly and a religious man! repent of thy sins past, amend thy life, walk before God in new obedience, labour to keep faith and a good conscience, hate every evil way, cleave unto the Lord, delight in his word, let it be the joy of thine heart; then certainly thou shalt be blessed and happy for evermore.

*Use 5.* To conclude, if the godly man be blessed, then the wicked man must of necessity be cursed; if the estate of the righteous and religious man be so comfortable and blessed, then the estate of the wicked and ungodly must needs be miserable and cursed, according to that of Moses unto the Israelites, Deut. xxviii. 1, 'If thou wilt not obey the voice of the Lord thy God,'—as indeed obedience is far from a wicked man, howsoever he may come with Saul's painted sacrifice; what follows?—'thou shalt be cursed in body, and cursed in soul.' &c. Again, Ps. xi. 21, 'Thou hast destroyed the proud, and cursed are they that err from thy commandments.' And

this misery of a wicked man doth consist in these things especially:—

*First,* That he can have no assurance that he is the child of God, that he is reconciled to God in Jesus Christ, or in his favour; nay, he may assure himself that he is out of his favour, and that God hates him as his enemy, and that he will manifest his wrath and displeasure upon him, by plaguing him here in this life, and by damning him for ever in the life to come.

Yea, the Lord begins that condemnatory sentence in the heart of a wicked man in this life. For every sin which a wicked man doth commit, there ariseth many times within their consciences accusing thoughts; and there is also a sentence within him, given out against him presently after he hath committed sin; there is a sentence within him gone out against him—by themselves judgment is gone out against themselves; which sentence albeit the wicked and ungodly man do not mark, yet the voice of his own disordered affections crying out so loud, that he cannot hear this voice of his own conscience accusing and condemning him; yet many times in this life affection is silent, as to Belshazzar, Dan. v., and Judas, Mat. xxvii., and then the conscience doth pronounce sentence against him with a shrill voice. Now if a man's conscience do condemn him, God is greater than his conscience, and will much more condemn him, 1 John iii. 20, 21. But assuredly in the day of judgment it will cry aloud in the ears of the Lord against the sinner for judgment and vengeance. And this is not the least misery under which the wicked man remains, being out of Christ.

*Secondly,* He can have no assurance that his sins be pardoned, but rather may be assured that his sins stand up in account against him, and that he shall be condemned for them. For it is that prerogative which belongs only to the godly man, to have his sins covered, Ps. xxxii. 1, 2—even the blessed man. But as for the wicked and ungodly, the Lord is far from justifying them; but their sins remain yet in God's book of account, and shall assuredly one day be laid to their charge, when the book shall be opened, and their horrible sins made manifest to the whole world, even to men and angels; even these their most secret sins, which now

they have committed never so closely in the dark, shall then come to light, and they shall not have so much as one fig-leaf to cover their nakedness, or one friend to speak so much as one word to the Lord Chief Justice of heaven and earth; but their own consciences, being as a thousand witnesses against them, they shall then be held even speechless, and the Lord will manifest upon them the fierceness of his wrath in that day.

*Thirdly*, He can have no peace of conscience: 'For there is no peace to the wicked,' Isa. lvii. 21. But always carries about him an evil conscience, that will never give him rest, but is as the flashings of hell-fire unto him; or else he hath in him a dead and sleepy conscience, seared, as it were, with a hot iron, that he feels not the weight and burden of his sins; which judgment is no way inferior to the former. Oh miserable then is the state and condition of the wicked, that have no true peace in life nor death, nor after death; for the Lord himself at the last shall be a judge and a witness against them; Moses and the righteous servants of God shall be a witness against them; yea, the dust of their feet that brought the glad tidings of peace shall witness against them; the stones of the field, the posts of their houses, this moth-eaten garment, all shall come in against them to hinder their peace with God; and their own conscience, will they, nill they, shall cry aloud, and say, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, and true are thy judgments.'

*Fourthly*, He can have no hope nor any assurance that he shall be saved, but is either carried away with a carnal persuasion or presumption, (which will deceive him in the end,) their consciences being seared; or else most justly fear that they shall be damned, their consciences being awake. Now then if this be the fearful and most woeful estate of all wicked men, that live in sin without repentance, who then would live in such an estate of life to gain a kingdom, in so great danger of eternal death and damnation every day they arise? Why do not such repent and turn unto God, that so they may be saved?

*Fifthly* and lastly, If a man be out of Christ, unregenerate, let him abound never so much in wealth, live in honour, bathe himself in pleasures, yet remaining still in his sins, he can take no sound comfort in any of these. For 'to them that are

defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their minds and consciences are defiled,' Tit. i. 15.

Their sweet savours and pleasant smells are stench, their meats and drinks are gall and worm-wood, their delicate fare is poison, their costly apparel as menstruous cloth, and their life a death, and they shall one day answer for every bit of bread they have eaten, as thieves and usurpers of those things that are none of theirs, for of proper right they belong unto the godly man. And thus have we briefly seen wherein the wicked man is cursed and miserable.

*That doth not walk in the counsel of the, &c.*

Here the godly man's virtues be first set down by a negative contestation in these words, 'He that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked;' out of which we may observe that there is a counsel of the wicked, and this is either private amongst themselves, or else public with others.

*Doct.* The counsel of sinful and wicked men, which is private in themselves, is a rumination, or some other preparation in every wilful and intended sin. And hence it is that the schoolmen affirm that *consilium, actus, eritus*, must concur in every wilful intended sin: and this is very apparent by the example of Jezebel, 1 Kings xxi. 10, that when she perceived the king to be so heavy for that he could not get the vineyard of righteous Naboth, she counselled with herself what she might do, to the end she might obtain it; and at last determined to write to the governors of the city in Ahab's name to proclaim a fast, and to cause Naboth to be brought forth before the assembly and stoned to death. This is clear again by the example of David, 2 Sam. xii. when he, walking upon the roof of his palace, had cast his eyes upon the beauty of Bathsheba, he did first take this counsel within himself concerning an equity<sup>1</sup> what she was; secondly, sent messengers unto her to move her to lie with him; and lastly, committed the act itself. This might be further cleared by the example of Cain, Judas, and all to confirm the truth of this point unto us.

Besides this private there is a counsel of the wicked public with other, as in the days of Omri, when cruel and wicked statutes were made against the Lord and his people. So in the days of Jero-

<sup>1</sup> Query, 'enquiry?'—ED.

boam, how did he take counsel, 1 Kings xii. 28, and at last concluded to make two calves for divine worship, the one whereof he set at Bethel, the other at Dan? And in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iii. 1, what a decree was gone forth by the king, the lords, and nobles, touching the worship of the golden image that was set up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon? So in the time of our Saviour Christ, under the New Testament, the Jews had agreed together that all that confess Christ should be excommunicated, John ix. 22, and forbade the disciples from preaching any more in his name, Acts iv. 18. And also in their council was our Saviour Christ condemned to death, Mat. xxvi. 66.

*Uses.* And the reason is clear for the further manifestation of the truth of this point: for as no man doth gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles, so what other fruit can be expected from such an unsavoury root, whose 'very minds and consciences are defiled,' Titus i. 13, but that all their whole consultations and actions should be imputed unholy and unclean.

*Use.* Hence, then, we may observe that the doctrine of the church of Rome touching this point is most false, that general councils cannot err. But we have cleared this before, that they may err and do err: for what should I speak of the second Nicene Council, which set up idolatry, and gave bodies to angels and the souls of men? Councils therefore have been misled, and may err.

Now the prophet proceeds further to shew who is a godly man, and what be his properties, and teacheth us in these words, that the first step and entrance to the leading of a godly life is to renounce the counsel and company of lewd, wicked, and ungodly men: whence we observe this doctrine.

*Doct. 2.* That he that would preserve himself from sin must carefully avoid all the occasions thereof. The wise man teacheth this doctrine, that 'he that walketh with the wise shall be wiser; but a companion of fools shall be worsen,' Prov. xiii. 20. This doth appear by the example of Jonathan, who by the friendship and familiarity which he had with David changed his life to better: whereas Solomon, by society and conjunction with the idolatrous wives, fell into idolatry; and Rehoboam, by walking with his young counsellors, and following their advice,

became worse and worse, 1 Kings xi. If, then, we would avoid evil, we must beware of all occasions, and no occasions more dangerous than evil company; every man therefore must take heed to himself, and beware how he joineth himself with acquaintance with all men indifferently, lest by their means he be corrupted. For every man by nature is like dry wood, which is apt to kindle so soon as fire is put to it, so give a man the least occasion, and presently he yieldeth to sin. There needs not indeed any devil to tempt us,<sup>1</sup> but let the least occasion that is be offered unto us, and straightway man becometh a tempter unto himself. And this is that which the apostle saith, James i. 14, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own concupiscence.' The enemy by which we are overcome is in our own bosom,—that is, man's natural corruption, which is fuel for the kindling of the fire of Satan's temptations. This appears in Eve, the mother of us all, in the first transgression: first, She saw the fruit; secondly, She conceived a liking of it; thirdly, She desired it; fourthly, She ate of it. Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, wandering abroad, laid herself open unto sin, and so fell, which might have been prevented had she avoided the occasions thereof, Gen. xxxiv.

And David, a man after God's own heart, having set open the casement of his soul, his eyes, (by the which the devil did easily wind himself into his heart,) and beheld Bathsheba washing herself, 2 Sam. xi; but by and by he lusted after her, sent for her and lay with her: so violent is man's corrupt nature in comprehending every occasion that might draw him to sin. It is therefore a point of great wisdom to discern between the deceit of sin and the fruit of sin before it be committed. O flattering enemy! In the action of committing, it is sweet as poison: after it is committed, a biting serpent. It comes to a man with a smiling countenance, as Joab unto Amasa, 'Art thou in health, my friend?' but withal it strikes to the heart and wounds unto death.

*Use 1.* This doctrine serveth for the reproof of those who are so far from the avoiding of the occasions of sin, as that they do freely and of their own accord seek and follow after them; they will not

<sup>1</sup> Mecum est quicquid mihi nocere potest.—Bernard, Med. xi.

tarry with Joseph till they be tempted by others, but they seek all occasions, and watch all opportunities to tempt others. Never ravenous beast did more eagerly pursue the prey than some do hunt after the occasions of sin; which is madness with a witness, as if the flesh were not prone enough of itself unto that which is evil, but that pains must be taken to help it forward to sin. Oh, then, how careful ought we to be to watch over our ways, and to avoid all the occasions of sin! Counterguard thy heart, saith Solomon, and keep it with watch and ward, Prov. iv. 23; look unto the casements of thy soul, thy eyes and thy ears. Pray with David, 'Lord, turn away my eyes from beholding vanity,' Ps. cxix. 37; make a covenant with them with Job, chap. xxxi. What folly, nay, what madness is it then in them that dare come into any company, that dare look and pry into the beauty of a woman, as though they were so strong that they were out of all danger to sin! But art thou more holy or strong than David, Peter, &c.? If not, thou must fall.

*Use 2.* Let all godly men and women take heed, let them fear themselves and doubt the worst. 'Blessed is the man that feareth always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall not prosper.' We must at all times have especial regard to the heart, or else we cannot stand. Such and so many are the assaults that Satan doth lay against our souls; this is that wholesome counsel that the apostle St Peter doth lay down unto us, who was both acquainted with the frailty of man's nature and the malice of Satan, when he saith, 'Be sober and watch, for your adversary the devil,' &c., 1 Pet. v. 8. Where he joineth unto sobriety watchfulness; for though a man be never so sober, yet if he do not watch withal, and that against the occasions of sin, he is easily made a prey to Satan. And for want of this care and watchfulness, many of God's children have been overtaken, and have fell into many horrible and grievous sins, which they could not so easily have done had they been watchful over their own affections. And thus much for the first doctrine in the description of a godly man, he must carefully avoid all occasions of sin.

*That doth not walk in the counsel of the wicked, &c.*

Here the prophet David shews who is a godly

man, and what be his properties. First, as we have heard, he avoids all occasions of sin; so now, in the second place, the counsel and company of lewd, wicked, and ungodly men. A godly man, and such a one as shall be truly happy and blessed indeed, doth distaste and dislike, yea, utterly renounce and abhor their society and company, their counsels and consultations, so as he doth shun and avoid them as dangerous and infectious; from whence we gather a second point of doctrine.

*Doct. 2.* That men must carefully shun and avoid the company of the wicked, it is very apparent, if they themselves will not be defiled with their abomination; for that rule of Solomon will stand, 'He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled.' Bad company is exceeding pernicious and hurtful, either to dissuade from that which is truly good, or to persuade to that which is naught and wicked. David maketh it the mark of a true member of the church, that 'in his eyes a vile person is contemned.' And the apostle wilketh all Christians who look for glory through Christ, that they would have nothing to do with the unfruitful works of darkness. And again, this indeed is 'pure religion and undefiled, to keep ourselves unspotted of the world.' This the apostle St Paul urgeth, 'Be not unequally yoked with infidels, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?' It is the exhortation of Solomon, 'Forsake the wicked, and ye shall live.' Joseph, living in the court of Pharaoh, had quickly learned to swear by the life of Pharaoh; and we know that it was in the common hall, amongst the servants of the high priests, that Peter had learned to curse and to swear. It were no less than treason in a subject to live in friendship with one that is a professed enemy to the king; much more is it treason in the subjects of the King of heaven to have society with the wicked; and this is observed to be the fault of Jehoshaphat, that he would help the wicked, and love them that hate the Lord. Such are even odious unto God, as David saith, 'Thou hatest all them that work iniquity.' Besides their company is exceeding dangerous, for the wrath of God hangeth over the head of the ungodly. This we may see in Lot, who for the fruitfulness of the place was drawn to live in Sodom, where the men were wicked, Gen. xix. So when they were taken prisoners, Lot was

taken prisoner with them; and had not the Lord been exceeding merciful unto him he had perished with them in the general overthrow of that city. And this was the voice of God from heaven concerning Babylon, 'Go out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues,' Rev. xviii. 4. And this was the cause why the Lord gave so strait a charge to the people of Israel, that they should have no dealing at all with the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, Exod. xxiii. 32, 'Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods: neither shall they dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me, neither shalt thou make any marriages with them, neither give thy daughter to his son, nor take his son to thy daughter, for they will cause thy son to fall away from me, and to serve other gods.' And how true this threatening from the Lord was, the event maketh it manifest; for they, neglecting this commandment from God, 'were mingled amongst the heathen, and learned their works,' as David saith, Ps. cvi. 35; and woeful experience doth prove this to be true of many who have sometime been indifferently conformable to good duties, afterwards falling into wicked and lewd company, have been corrupted and grown dissolute. Oh, what stumbling blocks are such unto a man for the performance of any good duty! This did David know full well when he said, 'Away from me, ye wicked, I will keep the commandments of my God,' Ps. cxix. 145, insinuating thereby, as may easily be gathered, that he could not set himself to the performance of any holy duty, as he ought, so long as such wicked company were about him; yea, it hath been a grief unto the godly to have been in the company of ungodly persons. As Lot living in Sodom, when he saw their filthy abominations, 'it vexed his righteous soul,' 1 Pet. ii. 7. And this was it that made David bemoan his estate in the time of his banishment, when he was constrained to abide amongst the uncircumcised people, 'Woe is me that I remain in Mesech, and to dwell in the tents of Kedar. My soul hath long dwelt among those that be enemies unto peace.' By all this that hath been spoken, it doth appear that godly and virtuous men, who shall be happy and blessed indeed, do carefully shun and avoid the lewd company of the wicked.

*Use 1.* This doctrine, in the first place, doth serve to improve all such as are careless of their company, that can use as much familiarity, and shew as good a countenance to the worst, and make them as welcome as the best, be they what they will be, Papists or Atheists; yea, let them be as profane as Esau, he is, notwithstanding, for their company; but by this means they do little think that they do hazard both faith and a good conscience, and cause the godly themselves to suspect them, that they are but profane. And indeed it cannot be otherwise; but if they themselves did make any conscience of sin, they would likewise make conscience of the occasions of sin, whereof what can be worse than lewd company, who are ready to make a mock at every good duty, and whose nature is to have other men to 'run into the same excess of riot' with themselves? 1 Pet. iv. 4. Yea, when a man or a woman hath some good things in them, as to love the word of God, to like of God's faithful ministers, to delight in prayer, &c., in comes a wicked man and breathes out his poison, seeking by bad counsel and lewd persuasions to dissuade them and draw them back. Oh, you love the minister too much. He will make you precise. You need not take such pains, but take your liberty. What need you be afraid of them? Oh, when such wretches step in, and thus pour out their lewd counsels and persuasions, what do they else but draw men to perdition; especially when they do deal with such as be young Christians, but coming on in the ways of godliness? And when they speak that to great personages, who by nature are most inclined to liberty, oh what lets are to a young Christian in the way of godliness!

*Note.* And when the Lord leaves a man or a woman to listen to such cursed counsel, it is a great sign that the Lord loves them not. So it is said that the Lord left Absalom, that he should not receive the good counsel of Ahithophel, because the Lord would destroy Absalom. So it is said of Rehoboam, that he listened only to the counsel of his young men, because the Lord would bring his judgments upon the house of Solomon.

*Use 2.* This should admonish all men to take heed of such kind of men, as the very limbs of the devil, and the messengers of Satan, who seek to draw men from God, and from Jesus Christ, and from

a godly life, to stop our ears at their lewd and damnable counsels, not to hear them, nor to listen to them; yea, if it lie in our power, to remove them, and to banish them our presence as the greater enemies of our souls, and the messengers of the devil, seeking to pervert and poison our poor souls, to put our mouths out of taste, and to make us dislike those that are sent of God, who ought to be most dear unto us.

*Objct.* It will be here objected, whether it be not lawful upon some occasion to be in their company, or to have dealings with wicked men?

*Answer.* In some case it is lawful, as thus—first, That it be only for necessity, as that we cannot avoid it in ordinary matters of this life unless we should go out of the world; secondly, That we have a due calling thereunto; thirdly, That we be not silent at the committing of sin, but that ever we shew our dislike of their vain courses; and lastly, That we labour with ourselves to be grieved at their sins, as Lot was at the Sodomites.

*In the counsel of the wicked, &c.*

Here the original word signifies such wicked men as are never quiet in their minds, but evermore musing and devising some mischief, which they may utter and practise as occasion serves.

*Doct.* 3. And in this, note the very property of a wicked and graceless man. He is never at rest, but still plotting and devising some mischief against God or good men. This we may see by divers examples. Ahithophel's counsel was esteemed like as one had asked counsel at the oracle of God, 2 Sam. xvi. The like we may see in Herod. When he heard of the birth of Christ, as of a new-born king, what policy did he use to destroy the Saviour of the world! The Scribes and Pharisees, how carefully did they consult and take counsel together against Christ to put him to death, Mat. xxvi. Yea, they brake their sleep about it. When the Jews (Jer. xviii. 18) could not endure Jeremiah to preach plain, and to tell them of their sins, they therefore by-and-by say thus: 'Come let us devise and imagine some mischief against the prophet of the Lord. Let us smite him with the tongue. Let us take no heed nor give any ear to his preaching.' So Hannan deviseth how to put Mordecai and the Jews out of favour, by devising a most vile accusation, Esth.

iii. So Doeg, that black mouthed dog, devised how to accuse David to Saul, 1 Sam. xxii. 9. So those wicked rulers did devise to invent some mischief against Daniel, Dan. iii. And the prophet Micah sheweth that it is an old practice of the wicked man to devise wicked things. In the primitive church, the enemies of God's children, that persecuted the Christians, devised this shameful slander, that they worshipped an ass's head, &c. So, in these days it is manifest that the devil stirs up wicked men to accuse God's children; to devise slanders and false accusations against them. The devil hath one Doeg or other to accuse David to Saul, to thrust him out of favour, and to bring him into disgrace. And whenas they can say nothing justly against them, then they begin to devise how they may raise up some false report or other to smite them with the tongue.

And the reason of this is, because they are foolish and ignorant. For they, not knowing the Lord, nor understanding his ways aright, but being in this respect worse than the ox that knoweth his owner, and the ass that knoweth his master's crib, (as the Lord doth complain of them, Isa. i. 2.) they cannot but do as St Paul did in the time of his ignorance, even oppose themselves against God and his children. And for this cause the Lord doth make his moan for the foolishness and ignorance of his people, as of the well-spring of all their rebellions against him, in these words, 'For my people are foolish, they have not known me; they are foolish children, and have none understanding. They are wise to do evil, but to do well they have no knowledge.'

*Use* 1. Seeing we are taught here what is the nature of wicked men,—namely, that they have in them a restless desire to pervert the ways of the godly, and to do some mischief,—this must teach us first of all to deal wisely and warily with them, lest we be corrupted by them. We are here set as upon a hill, or a stage, and professing Jesus Christ, a small spot will be seen in our garment. It becometh us therefore to be as wise as serpents, and as innocent as doves, Mat. x. 16, to the end we may stop the mouths of gainsayers, and cut off occasions from them that seek occasions. And to this end we must evermore be mindful in our prayers, to pray unto God to be delivered from them; for unless we

be armed from above, we shall easily be overtaken by their assaults, and through the corruptions of our own hearts, which are prone to all sin; they deal warily and circumspectly, they work by all means to pervert our ways, and to make us twofold worse than themselves the child of Satan. How much more careful ought we to be to prevent them? which we shall do the better by shunning the occasions of sin.

*Use 2.* Secondly, We are taught here, that if we labour to be the disciples of Christ, and to be blessed, what entertainment we shall find in the world,—namely, to have wicked and ungodly men to stand in our way and hinder us, as they did stand in Zacchæus's way, when he went forth to see Christ, Luke xix. If thou be once in God's presence, and dost begin to call upon him for mercy, they will rebuke thee, as they did the poor blind man in the Gospel, Luke xviii. 39. If thou be sick, yea, dead in trespasses and sins, and Christ doth begin to come home to the house of thy soul to heal thee, and to raise thee up from the death of thy sins, they will stop his passage and entrance in if possible they can; as they did when Christ came to the ruler's daughter which was dead, Mat. ix. 23. But as Christ turned them out of doors, saying, 'Get ye hence,' so must thou shake them off, and not communicate with flesh and blood, in matters that concern eternal life, and the salvation of thy soul; for if thou do, thou canst never be saved. Neither must we look after the love and liking of the world, nor hang upon men for their applause and favour; for where there is not the fear of God, surely such men are most unconstant in their ways, turning upon every small occasion; yea, and the love and favour of such men must needs be bent towards the worst, seeing themselves are bad, and set themselves in no good way. Remember what Christ said unto his disciples, John xv. 19, 'If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' Wherefore as they that run at tilt, look not to the vulgar people what they say, but to the judges; so care not thou for the world, but look ever what the judge of heaven and earth doth allow and approve of.

*That hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked.*

By counsel he here meaneth the subtleties and craft of the wicked, by which they push themselves forward, and labour to draw others to be like unto themselves, according to that of Solomon, 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent not unto them.' From whence we gather a fourth point of doctrine.

*Doct. 4.* Namely, That it is a most horrible and grievous sin to give evil counsel. To commit sin is that which highly offends the majesty of God, and draweth down upon us all punishments, both temporal and eternal: but to counsel others to commit sin is the very height of sin.

This is noted in the Scripture to be the sin of Jezebel, who was a furtherer of Ahab's wickedness, 1 Kings xxi. 7, for when he could not by any lawful means attain the vineyard of Naboth, she said unto him, 'Doe'st thou sway the sceptre, rule the kingdom, and manage the state? Arise and eat bread, I will give thee the vineyard.' This was the counsel of Ahithophel unto Absalom, 2 Sam. xvi. 21. Fearing his reconciliation to his father David, and therein his own just confusion, he gives such counsel whereby he might take away all hope of agreement, 'Go in to thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house, and when all Israel shall hear thou art abhorred of thy father, the hands of all that are with thee shall be strong.' This is likewise set down by Solomon in the Proverbs, when he expresseth the sin of seducers, saying, Prov. i. 11, 'Come with us, let us lie in wait for the blood of the innocents, we will swallow them up alive like a grave even whole, as those that go down into a pit. Cast in thy lot amongst us, we will all have one purse; their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood.' And this doth appear in the brethren of Joseph, when they purposed the overthrow of their brother, Gen. xxxvii. 10, 'Come,' say they, 'let us slay him and cast him into some pit, and we shall say a wicked beast hath devoured him.' And this appeared to be the malice of the high priests and elders of the people, who moved the people to desire that Barabbas might be delivered rather than Christ, and persuaded Judas for a sum of money to betray him; enticed the soldiers with a great sum of money to noise it abroad that his disciples came by night and stole him away while they slept, Mat. xxviii. 12. All these testimonies, and many more,



may serve for the confirmation of this doctrine, that it is a most horrible and grievous sin to give evil counsel.

Seeing that it is a most great and grievous sin to give evil counsel, this teacheth us our duty, that whosoever they shall set upon us to draw us away from God, that we be careful that we consent not unto them. It is not enough for a man to say, Alas, I devised it not, neither am I the first that have committed the like, for this shall excuse no man, that he was not the author of an evil. For surely if it be so great a sin to seduce, it is no less sin to be seduced, and God will one day find them no less guilty, but shall partake with them of the same punishment. If a man should have about him a great sum of money, or other treasure, and should willingly and wittingly put himself into the company of thieves, and will be drawn by them out of the way, were this man to be pitied if he should lose all that he had? Even so it is with a Christian, that doth carry daily about with him a rich treasure, his soul and conscience, which he must keep unspotted of the world; if he listen to the charming of the wicked, and will be drawn out of the way of God's commandments to commit sin and to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, is it not just with God that this man should perish for the same? So, then, we see it standeth us in hand to beware of consenting to sin, and counselling others to commit sin: for if we give our consent unto them we are partakers with them in their wickedness, and shall be sure one day to have share with them in their punishments.

*Use 2.* Secondly, Seeing the giving of evil counsel is so evil a sin, both in him that doth counsel another, as also in him that consenteth unto it, both which we must carefully shun and avoid; yet this is not all, but we must also seek for the society of the godly, that all our delight may be in them; we must by all means join ourselves in friendship with them, and make much of their assemblies. For with the upright thou shalt learn to be upright. This Solomon teacheth us, 'He that walketh with the wise shall be wiser.' It is, indeed, a rare thing to find a man that will counsel others to follow godliness, and therefore such as do are much to be respected; love him as the dearest friend that will

direct thee in the ways of salvation, and be a guide unto thee in the path that shall lead unto life. Let it be far from thee to be ashamed to follow the counsel of such as are discreet and godly, it is not material who they be, whether our superiors, or equals, or our inferiors, for the counsellor is not so much to be regarded as the counsel. If it be holy, just, and good, receive it as from God, who thus speaketh unto thee by his servant. If it be evil, reject it as coming from the devil, who speaketh by his instruments.

*That hath not walked, &c.*

The last thing that we have now to consider out of the first part of the description of a godly man is this, 'He hath not walked,' &c. By walking, the prophet David here meaneth (according to an usual metaphor in Scripture) a common, usual course of a man's behaviour, or their ordinary trade of life. And the word which is here used is rendered in a tense or time, which, in the own tongue, noteth a continuance of walking, even all the days of their life. For otherwise who can say his heart is free, but that at some time or other the counsel or bad example of the wicked hath prevailed with him; but that is not meant here in this place, when a man hath withdrawn himself from their lewd conversations, and betaken himself to the ways of God's commandments. From whence we gather a twofold doctrine: first, that the falls, slips, and infirmities of God's children are many and great, which many times they fall into, and yet cannot properly be said to walk in them, because they rise daily out of the same; and secondly, That 'to walk,' it is said of the godly, in respect of God's commandments, because, as it is in the second verse, 'here is their delight.'

*Doct. 5.* It is most true that there are the seeds of all sin whatsoever, naturally rooted and inbred with us, which, if they be not prevented, are ready to break out upon any occasion that shall be offered. And howsoever the godly do desire to please God, and endeavour to serve God in truth and sincerity of heart, yet do they often stumble in their race, through the burden that presseth down, and the sin that hangeth on so fast. This truth is confessed by Solomon in his worthy prayer at the dedication of the temple, 1 Kings viii. 46, 'If any man sin against

there, (for there is none that sinneth not,) if he turn again with all his heart,' &c. Again, Job xv. 14, 'What is man that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman that he should be just?' Again, 'All are gone out of the way, they are all corrupt, there is none that doeth good, no not one,' Ps. xiv. Most woeful and fearful was the fall of David, as the Scripture hath recorded it, 2 Sam. xi. It may seem very strange that a man as David was, even after God's own heart, could possibly fall so far as he did. For if we consider the circumstances and degrees of his sin, it will appear that (final impenitence excepted) a reprobate could scarce commit a greater. For first he committed adultery with Uriah's wife; when this was done he glavereth and flattereth with the woman's husband, and bade him go home to refresh himself with his wife, thinking thereby to father the bastard on him. When this succeeded not he went further, and unto his adultery he added murder, that he might bear, as the grief of it in his heart, so the shame of it in his forehead. And in this he wrought worse than Jezebel, for he makes Uriah the messenger to carry the letters for his own execution. What shall I say of Noah, of Lot, Peter, &c.? I need not to stand on this doctrine, seeing woeful experience in all the godly doth prove it to be true.

*Use 1.* It may teach us that we be not too rash in judging and condemning our brethren. We see by this that hath been delivered that the dear child of God may fall most grievously and lowly, and yet be restored again to the favour of God, because he doth not walk on in sin, as the wicked do. But whensoever, through the temptations of Satan, or the frailty of his own flesh, he falls into sin, forthwith with Peter he goes out of that sin, and weeps bitterly for the same. And therefore, as St James saith: chap. iv. 12, 'Who art thou that judgeth another man?' We may not set bounds and limits to God's mercy, to say that any shall finally be damned, howsoever a man may be in the state of damnation for a time,—this were to sit in God's chair. Let us all acknowledge ourselves to be but men, and let none usurp the authority of God's judgment. Let us therefore consider what we ourselves are before we cast our eyes upon other men; for they are the most sharp and severe judges of

their brethren that forget their own infirmities. And I doubt not but all the children of God do know by experience in themselves how hardly sin is subdued and mastered in them. How many sighs and groans it requireth, how many prayers and tears doth it cost them! What a striving and struggling they have within themselves to keep it under, and yet for all this it is very hardly subdued; so that the knowledge of our own weakness and unworthiness must arm us with meekness towards our brethren.

*Use 2.* By the rule of this doctrine we are admonished to be very wary and circumspect over ourselves. Did David fall, did Lot, Noah, Peter, &c., fall? Oh, whither shall we fall if God do but a little leave us to ourselves? Who dare presume of his own strength and worthiness, when such worthy pillars as these have been shaken? Yea, the lamentable shipwreck of such men as these may make us to fear a tempest before it do come. It is the devil's crafty counsel and subtle policy to make us overween ourselves, and to make us boast and presume of ourselves. For the devil doth know full well that this lifting of a man up, is the very next way to tumble and throw him down; as Solomon saith, 'Pride goeth before destruction, and an high mind before the fall,' Prov. xvi. 18. And therefore acknowledging our own want of strength, and our own inability to stand without the assistance of God's Spirit, let us 'not be high-minded, but fear,' Rom. xi. 20. And this we have seen that the falls and slips of God's children are many and great, which notwithstanding cannot hinder their happiness, because they *walk* not in them,—that is, they make it not their continual practice to live and delight in sin.

*Doct. 6.* Now we are come to the second, which doth note unto us that the godly man, who shall be truly happy and blessed indeed, is so far from making his life a life of sin, as that he doth rather in the whole course of the same walk with God in obedience.

For therefore indeed is our course of new life compared to a *way*, to shew that the godly must always be walking in it from the beginning of their course unto the end of the same. It was the commendations of Enoch and Noah that, notwithstanding

ing the days and times wherein they lived were dangerous, yet they 'walked with God,' Gen. v. 22; vi. 9,—that is, they considered more the commandments of God, what he had appointed, than what was practised; and desired rather to be approved of God through their obedience, than through their disobedience to purchase the favour of men. It was the charge given by God unto Abraham, 'Walk before me,' Gen. xvii. 1,—that is, let it ever be thy care, that seeing I am present everywhere and privy to all thy counsels, that thou walkest as in my sight. And this was the best testimony that Solomon could give of his father David, that 'he walked before God in truth and in righteousness,' 1 Kings iii. 6. Yea, this did minister comfort to godly Hezekiah, when he thought he should die: 'Remember, O Lord, that I have walked before thee in truth,' Isa. xxxviii. 3. And to this agreeth that of the Apostle Paul, who 'forgot that which was behind, and endeavoured himself to that which was before, and followed hard towards the mark, to the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ,' Phil. iii. 12. He was not like unto a vain and foolish man who, running in a race, will be ever and anon looking back to see how much ground he had rid; but his eye was always upon the mark or goal, to consider how much he had to run, how far off he was from perfection, and what he had more to do in his Christian course, that he might finish the same with joy. It is the end that makes all: 'He that shall endure to the end shall be saved.' Our Saviour saith not there, that he that endureth for a season, but he that continueth to the end; not every one that *fighteth*, but he that *overcometh* shall receive a crown of life. These examples do show us how the godly have walked; and these and the like precepts teach us we should walk so as in the end we may be blessed.

*Use 1.* Hence we are taught this lesson, that we must never be weary of well-doing; seeing that perseverance only hath the promise of reward, we must not depart out of the Egypt of sin, and then with the Israelites, and with Lot's wife, look back to the Sodom of their sins, but remember that thou owest unto God all thy days. 'The trees planted in the Lord's house, bring forth fruit in their age,' Ps. xcii. 13; and they which do not so shall be 'hewn down

and cast into the fire,' Mat. iii. 10. It was the commendation of the church of Thyatira, that her 'works were more at last than at first,' Rev. ii. 19, a reproof of their folly who, having kept the path of righteousness for a time, do after walk in no good way, but think with one jump to leap into heaven with a *Lord, have mercy on me*, at the last. But know, O thou vain man, that thou must walk in the way,—that is, thou must use all good means for the attaining of life and salvation, thou must hear the word diligently and carefully, pray, read, &c.

I doubt not but the serious thinking upon this, that God challengeth every day at our hands, yea, all the days of our life, to be spent in his service, will reform many corruptions in us. For, alas! the care of the most is how they may keep credit with men, though they purchase God's displeasure, which will then stand such in little stead, when all things shall come to receive their due trial; even 'every work done in the body, whether it be good or evil,' 2 Cor. v. 10. And thus much for the first part of the description of a godly man negatively, 'He doth not walk in the counsel of the wicked.'

*Nor stand in the way of sinners.*

That is, a godly man doth not settle himself to live as wicked men do, nor frame his life after their lewd example; where we are to observe two points. First, That there is a way of sinners, in which the ungodly stand. Secondly, That the godly stand not in it.

First, then, That there is a way of sinners, in the which they stand and live. It is very apparent, called in the Scriptures by divers names; as by the name of the way of the ungodly. 'The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish.'

*Doct. 1.* It is termed an evil way, the way of lying, a wicked way, &c. And by these ways we are still to understand the course of life and conversation of the wicked; wherein we are taught this doctrine, that notwithstanding all the means that God and man doth use to the contrary, the wicked man will still persist and go on in sin, which is here understood out of the word *stand*. This appeareth in the example of Cain, albeit he were admonished and reprov'd of God for his wrath and malice conceived against his brother, Gen. iv. 6; yet for all

that, Cain will please himself in his own way, and never rest till he have shed the innocent blood of his own brother. This is seen likewise in the example of the old world, when the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great, and all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually, and how they pleased themselves in this way, the Lord stirred up Noah, the preacher of righteousness, who warned them from God; yet they would continue still in their own ways, giving themselves to nothing but eating and drinking, and all excess, till the flood came and swept them clean away, Gen. vi. 5. This is clear likewise by the example of Pharaoh, on whom all means were assayed for his conversion, Exod. ix. 10; for what could the Lord do unto him that he did not? He sent Moses and Aaron unto him, warning him from God to let the people of Israel go, and to that end sent judgment upon judgment, one upon the neck of another, even ten in number; yet for all this, Pharaoh chose rather to continue still in his own way, and would none of the Lord's. So it is that saying of Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 22, 'Bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.' And no marvel, for the spirit of slumber hath so covered their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts are so possessed with spiritual fornication, which makes them thus to go a-whoring from God, even haled with the fury of their own affections, snared of the devil, and taken of him at his will. Oh miserable and unhappy condition! Fearful is the woe that lies upon all those that thus walk in their own ways. For most certain it is, that 'they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts,' so far, as that they have made choice of the Lord's way, howsoever many times they may stumble and fall in walking therein. But of the wicked it may truly be said of them, 'The way of peace have they not known.'

*Use 2.* We heard before, that we ought not to proceed so far with any, as to judge of their final estate and condition; for that were to sit in God's chair, and to take his office upon him. Yet to say of some, that they are in the state of damnation and, unless they repent, shall perish for ever, doubtless this is not unlawful; for as love bids me not to determine too soon, so not to be abused too late. God bids me

look upon the tree, and judge of the fruit. I may say thou art in the state of damnation, for I see thy heart through thy hand. But whether thou shalt finally be damned, there I leave thee; for God may have mercy upon thee upon thy last repentance. I may come to a tree, and say, Here is little fruit; or, Here is no fruit; or, Here is bad fruit. But I cannot say, Never fruit grow on it more. But alas, alas, this is not all, this is not all that wicked men are thus discovered to men, but that the Lord will find them out, and give them their portion in the lake of fire. And indeed, this is that that ought to be a terror to all the wicked and ungodly to consider, that as their hearts are hardened and their consciences seared, so the plagues and punishments of God attend upon them. 'If thou walk stubbornly against me, and wilt not obey me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon thee, according to thy sins,' Lev. xxvi. Let us all then, as we tender the salvation of our own souls, take heed unto our paths, that we stand not in the way of sinners, that we sin not with delight and deliberation; it is the very brand of a reprobate, and such alone as God hath forsaken, 'Take heed, therefore, that there be not in any of you an evil heart to depart from the living God.' And thus much for the first point of doctrine; that there is a way of sinners, in which the wicked walk, which leadeth unto death.

*Doct. 2.* The second point of doctrine that doth now offer itself to our consideration is this, that a godly man doth not settle himself to live as the wicked do, nor frames his life after his lewd example, which is here meant, when the prophet saith, 'He doth not stand in the way of sinners.' Yea, it is altogether impossible for a godly man, and one that is truly regenerate, to have in him a full purpose to sin, and to live in sin with deliberation, and to delight in the same. For a purpose to live in any known sin, is a sign of a wicked man and a graceless heart, as when a man is told of his sin, of his ignorance and carelessness in God's service, praying, hearing, &c., yet still he will be careless and negligent in the same. So when a man is reprov'd for his swearing, yet still will swear; when a man is reprov'd for profaning the Sabbath, yet will profane it; when a man is reprov'd for his uncleanness, drunkenness, malice, &c., and yet for all that will

continue in those sins. Surely this purpose to stand in the way of the sinners, is a fearful sign of a wicked man, and is far from a godly man, and one that is truly sanctified, which shall be blessed for ever more. It was a cursed speech of a cursed wretch, 'I know not the Lord, neither will I let the children of Israel go,' Exod. v. 2. This was the case of those rebellious Jews spoken of by Jeremiah, 'We will not hear, nor do, but as we list, &c., as we have done,' Jer. xlv. 16. And this was that which made the case of Herod so fearful, that notwithstanding he heard John Baptist willingly, and did many things at his request, all which were good things in him, yet for all that he would not leave his adultery, but continue in it, Mark vi. 20; which purpose to sin, of all things is far from a godly man, as St John saith, 'He that is born of God sinneth not,' 1 John iii. 9,—that is, with whole consent, but in part, and man being partly flesh and partly spirit, as he is regenerate, sin proceeds not from him, but as he is flesh. As for the wicked, it is not so with them; for it is meat and drink to a wicked man to do the works of the devil. It is worth even our best consideration what is said of the Apostle Paul, Acts ix. 1, that he once 'breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.' But when was this? Even in the time of his ignorance; but afterwards he preached the same gospel which before he persecuted, and laboured ever after all the days of his life, to build up the church of God which before he laboured to pull down. And this appears in David, in Peter, in Mary Magdalene, &c., who after they had once escaped the snares of the devil, dedicated ever after their whole life to the service of God. This exhortation doth the apostle give to the Ephesians, 'Ye were once darkness, but now are light in the Lord; walk as children of the light,' Col. iii. 7, Eph. v. 8. By these and the like examples it doth appear, that the godly stand not in the way of sinners,—that is, take no liberty to themselves to live in the custom and practice of any known sin.

*Use 1.* This may serve, in the first place, to reprove such kind of sinners as are so far from leaving their sins and walking with God in obedience of life that they are not ashamed to defend their sins. Tell the swearer of his swearing and blaspheming of

the name of God, he will answer, *What* he hopeth he may swear so long as he swears nothing but the truth. Tell the covetous man of his covetousness, he will answer for it, he must make the best of his own, and he must be a good husband. So tell the drunkard of his drunkenness and fearful abusing of the good creatures of God, his answer is, It is in kindness and good fellowship. Tell the proud man of his pride and strange attires, his answer is, It is the fashion, and he doth but as others do. Is not this to stand in the way of sinners? Is not this to commit sin with delight, and to say as Pharaoh, Herod, and the Jews, Exod. ix., Mark vi., Jer. xlv., 'We will not repent, we will not leave our sins, but continue in them, let God and man say what they will; yea, this is but to pay one debt by another, and as the apostle saith, 'Heap up wrath against the day of wrath,' Rom. iv.

*Use 1.* We are all here admonished, as we love our own souls, to take heed of this, that we never sin with an high hand against God, wittingly and willingly. But if we hear sin reprov'd let us leave it, be it ever so pleasant or profitable, let us be like that good king Josiah, 2 Kings xxii., who hearing the book of the law read unto him, his heart melted within him and he wept for his sins: for so long as we have in us a purpose to live in sin, it is impossible that we should ever fear God or truly repent. Let us pray with David, Ps. xix. 12, 13, 'Lord, keep thy servant from presumptuous sin.' And let us know, that if we regard, that is to say, love wicked men to our hearts, and have a purpose to live in sin, God will not regard our prayers, nay, all we do is abomination to the Lord. Say now therefore unto laughter, 'Thou art mad:!' pronounce the ways of the wicked to be but vain; say unto thy own soul, I will have nothing to do with the ways of iniquity. And this will give thee courage when thou shalt come to look Christ Jesus in the face, when thou canst say with the apostles, 'Lord, I have forsaken all to follow thee,' Mat. xix. 27. Oh, blessed is the servant whom his master when he cometh shall find so doing, Mat. xxiv. 46.

*Use 5.* Last of all, we learn here a notable difference between the child of God regenerate and a wicked man. He that is born of God and truly regenerate, he doth not commit sin with full purpose

and consent of will, but against his will, so as he can truly say with Paul, 'The evil that I would not do, that do I,' Rom. vii. 15,—that is, I am drawn through the corruption of nature and the temptations of Satan to do that evil which I hate and condemn. But the wicked man sins with full consent and purpose. I sin and would not sin, saith the godly man: I sin and will sin, saith the wicked man. Yea, what service soever the regenerate man doth give unto sin it is like that service that Israel gave unto Pharaoh in Egypt, compelled and wrung out from them by oppression, which made them sigh and cry unto God to be eased of the same. But the service which he doth give unto the Lord is voluntary and cheerful. Well, to end this point, this is the sum:—know this, whosoever thou art, that if thou 'stand in the way of sinners,'—that is, takest liberty to thyself to live in any known sin, thou canst have no assurance that thou art yet within the covenant of grace, blessedness is no part of thy portion: he must become a new creature that shall enter into new Jerusalem. And thus much for the second part of the description of a godly man, negatively, he doth not stand in the way of sinners.

*Nor sit in the seat of the scornful.*

By 'seat of the scornful' he meaneth here the fellowship and society of the ungodly. So that the meaning of the prophet David here in this place is, that the godly man, who shall be this blessed man here spoken of, will not converse with those men, nor be familiar with those that make a mock of all religion, and openly profess all impiety; and the word *sitting* doth import such an habit and custom in evil, that a man meaneth not to change his mind. In which words, as in the former, we are to consider the two points: first, that there is a seat of the scornful, in the which the wicked sit; and secondly, that the godly do not sit in it.

For the first, the Scriptures discover unto us a threefold chair or seat: first, of justice, and such a one may that throne seem to be which Solomon erected, 1 Kings xviii.

The second is of doctrine, as our Saviour Christ saith of the Scribes and Pharisees, 'They sit in Moses' chair,' Mat. xxiii. 3.

Thirdly, we read of a seat or chair of the scornful, spoken of in this psalm.

This sin of scorning hath its first being from the root of pride, which is the root from whence this sin of scorning doth spring; and, indeed, it is the fruit of pride, and it is the nature of men who are tainted with this sin of pride to suppose that they are better than others, and therefore in regard of themselves they do condemn and despise another. If they have wealth they despise any other that is poorer than themselves. Honour makes them swell in disdain of their poor brethren; their wisdom, learning, strength, beauty, friends, eloquence, all these lift men up with pride, and makes them to scorn those that are under them. And this comes to pass, not in respect of riches themselves, or honour, or beauty, or the like, but in respect of our corrupt nature, which is so ready to abuse them to our own condemnation. But, O man, why art thou thus puffed up with pride? thou wast but earth, thou art but flesh, thou shalt be but worms' meat; I pray, what great cause hath earth, or flesh, or worms' meat to be proud? We were all of us born in sin, we live in misery, and we shall die in corruption. What cause hath sin, or misery, or corruption to be proud, but to be humbled? Besides the manifold infirmities that we are subject unto here, and the innumerable diseases that are ready to happen unto us in this life. All teaching us this same lesson, to be humble and lowly of mind.

And in this seat the wicked and ungodly do ease themselves and take their delight, as sometimes Babylon did, who vaunted so much that she did 'sit as queen, and should see no mourning,' as it were in scorn of all that God could do unto her.

And this was the case of cursed Pharaoh, who seemed to mock God to his face when he said, 'I know not the Lord, neither will I let the children of Israel go,' Exod. ix. So then the doctrine that we gather hence from the text is this:—

*Doct. 3.* That evil men do not usually make a stay in sin when at first they have committed it, but they proceed by degrees to be worse and worse. Falling from one mischief to another: first, the devil will suggest evil thoughts into a man, his evil thoughts do toll on consent, consent breedeth action, action bringeth custom, and custom begetteth a necessity in sinning, which is the forerunner of death. This appeareth in Cain, in Pharaoh, and in

Judas, who by steps and degrees in sinning, came at the last to be hardened in sin. As in Judas, who was at first a cunning dissembler; secondly, a secret thief; thirdly, a bold liar; fourthly, a traitor; and lastly, a reprobate. And thus a wicked man, as it is in the psalm, 'They fall from one wickedness to another;' and as we see it clear here in the words of this text, from walking to standing, and from standing stock-still in sin, at length through custom come to lie down and wallow in sin. Oh, happy thou is that man that sinneth least! yea, next, he that returneth unto God soonest; but most woeful is the estate of him that goeth on in sin, that with Alab hath sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord.' For mark what followeth, Jer. xiii. 23, 'Can the blackamoor change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may they do good who have accustomed themselves to do evil.' Where the prophet sheweth that custom in sinning is almost an incurable disease. This is a lamentable estate, and this is a fearful judgment of God, for a man thus to be left over to himself, to fall thus from one evil to another, and to heap together a great measure against the day of wrath, Ps. lxxxi. 11. And the cause of all this in a man is his disobedience towards his God; for this doth the prophet make clear when he saith, 'My people would not hear my voice, and Israel would have none of me; so I gave them up unto hardness of heart, and they have walked in their own counsels.' Where the prophet David sheweth that seeing they would not be reclaimed and reformed, as in mercy towards them the Lord Almighty vouchsafed them the means of reformation, his word; therefore the Almighty gave them over unto the hardness of their own hearts, that so they might fill up the measure of their iniquities.' 1 Thes. ii. 16, and that the just wrath and vengeance of the Almighty might then fall upon them.

*Use 1.* Hence we are taught how dangerous a thing it is to give any entertainment unto sin at the first; it will bring a man to the height of sin in the end, even openly to profess it, and to practise it with delight and greediness. Custom in sin taketh away all sense of sin, so as by custom men come to judge of sin to be no sin; yea, it makes it very natural to a man, so as such men who at first would have been ashamed to have been seen amongst lewd

company, yet by custom have gotten such a habit of sin, that they have grown to be very impudent and shameless; like Tamar, who at the first did play the whore with a veil, as being ashamed to be seen, but afterwards grew more impudent. So many a man would have blushed to have been heard swear, to be seen drunk, to be found in unchaste company, but through custom have grown so impudent, that afterwards would blush at nothing. And when a man takes the chair of sin and sits down in it, and hath got a custom, and taken delight in sin, how hard a thing is it for a man to leave that sin! He that hath got a habit and custom of swearing, as he grows shameless in it, so how hardly doth he leave it! Even so of drunkenness, &c. A nail knocked into a post with many blows is hardly pulled out; and sin often committed, and grown familiar with a man through custom, is hardly left. Custom is like a strong stream, it carrieth a man into all sin with violence; and as a man by continual labour so hardeneth his hand that it becometh senseless, so custom in sin hardeneth the heart, that a man's conscience becometh senseless.

This must teach us to repent befores, not to suffer sin to come to such a head, that it is more likely to master a man than a man it; for if thou dost not repent this day, thou wilt find it harder to repent to-morrow; thyself groweth weaker, thy iniquity stronger.

*Note.* Custom is a tyrant which will hardly be resisted; therefore it shall be thy wisdom to repent with speed, to delay no longer, but while it is called to-day to break off thy sins, and to turn to God for mercy.

*Use 2.* We are taught hence, that seeing wicked men grow worse and worse, adding sin unto sin, and committing all iniquity, even with greediness, so their damnation doth not sleep, but they draw nearer and nearer their destruction. Yea, the judgment of Almighty God follows them at their heels, and in the end will overtake them. Thus it was with the old world. What a heap of sins had they gathered together, adding sin unto sin, as drunkenness unto thirst! But when the measure of their iniquity was full, the Lord God was at hand with his judgments, and they could not escape. This was the case of the sinful Sodomites, whose sins cried up

to heaven for vengeance, Gen. xviii. Howsoever they might glut themselves with sin, and drink down iniquity like water, it was but for a season; the Lord would be no longer provoked by their wicked and sinful lives, but sent down fire and brimstone from heaven upon them. Every sin doth help somewhat to increase the weight, and to fill up the measure, of a wicked man's iniquity, Mat. xii. 36. And that God which keepeth a register of the works, and who will one day give unto every man according unto his works, and when they shall go the way of all flesh, they shall then say, 'What hath pride profited us, and what hath the pomp of riches brought us to?' When they shall see, that all the days of their life they have wearied themselves in vain, and then shall be plunged into irrevocable and intolerable torments.

*Use 3.* This may serve to reprove such as, relying upon their own writers,<sup>1</sup> knowledge, strength, and godliness, dare converse and keep company with notorious atheists, papists, mock-gods, swearers, swaggerers, drunkards, &c. By which means it is just with God, they not shunning the occasions of sin, are perverted by them to their own destruction. And no less worthy of reproof are those kind of men or women, that link themselves or their children in marriage with such as be vile, wicked, profane, and irreligious. Alas, what agreement is there between Christ and Belial, God and the devil, light and darkness, a believer and an infidel, to have such near conjunction and fellowship with them? How can such escape, and not be polluted with their sin? And because men and women in this match make no better choice, but marry for love of money, beauty, or the like, rather than for religion, virtue, or for the fear of God, it cometh to pass, that they live together most uncomfortable and in great discontentment.

*Nor sit in the seat of scornors.*

By scornors in this place are meant such wicked men as are both hardened in sin, and live a wicked life; such as are become stubborn and rebellious sinners, professing all impiety, contemning God and man, such as being confirmed with the long practice of sin and a bad life, have got a habit of sin, and can do nothing else but sin, and despise all good duties, and make a scoff at all religion.

<sup>1</sup> Query, 'virtues?'—Ed.

*Doct. 2.* Hence we learn this doctrine, that this is the property of a notorious lewd and wicked man, to make a mock of all piety and godliness, to make a mock of all religion, and every Christian duty. And such a man is come unto a wonderful height of sin, and is notoriously wicked and ungodly. So it is said, that cursed Ham mocked his father Noah, and Ishmael mocked godly Isaac, because, as it is like, Ishmael seeing godly Isaac performing some holy duty of religion, prayer, thanksgiving, or the like, he laughed him to scorn. The Athenians mocked Paul, 'What will this babbler say?' Acts xvii. 18. So the Scribes and Pharisees mocked our Saviour Christ, saying, 'Hail! King of the Jews,' Mark xxvi. 28. The Jews mocked St Peter's sermon, saying, 'These men are full of new wine,' Acts ii. 12. The children of Bethel mocked Elisha the prophet, saying, 'Go up, thou bald head,' 2 Kings ii. 22. This was the complaint of godly Jeremy, 'O Lord, I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me,' Jer. xx. 7. And as it was, so it is still, and will be, the world is full of such lewd and wicked men, such mock-gods, that mock and mow at all good duties, scoffing and scorning all religion, flouting and misusing God's faithful ministers, rail upon them and revile them; yea, if any man fear God, make conscience of good duties, to hear the word of God diligently and carefully, to read, pray in family, &c.; and will not swear with the swearer, drink with the drunkard, and run with wicked men into all excess of riot; this man shall be mocked and pointed at, and called at by the name of Puritan and Precisian, and I know not what, and can very hardly endure their company. Now these kind of men, these scoffing Ishmaels, and cursed Hams, though they seem to be never so honest and civil, yet the word of God paints them out in their colours, as the most vile and wicked men that live in the world, because they contemn and despise, they mock and scorn God's word, and those that be most dear unto God.

*Use 1.* Let all such scornors and scoffing mates take heed, for as they be most abominable in the sight of Almighty God, so they seldom or never escape unpunished. Look on that cursed Ham, scoffing Ishmael; behold God's vengeance upon those two-and-forty youngsters that mocked the



prophet Elisha. What became of them that mocked and misused the prophets of the Lord? What became of those that mocked and misused our Saviour Christ?

And let men but observe it, and mark it well, and they shall clearly see some token or other of God's vengeance upon the heads of such scoffing wretches; yea, let all such wicked men know that they be too much their own foes, in that they hate the godly, mock God's ministers, rail upon his servants; they fare the better for them every day they rise. Whatsoever wicked and ungodly men have and enjoy, it is for the godly's sake: for if it were not for them, their sakes, the sun would scarce shine upon them, the heavens would fall upon them, the earth would open her mouth and swallow them, the fire would burn them, the water would drown them, and all the creatures of God would arm themselves against them. And therefore the children of God (as one saith) are like a piece of cork cast into the sea full of nails; the cork bears them up, which otherwise would sink of themselves one by one. Now, then, what a folly and madness is this, to hate them, to mock them, and to misuse them, by whom they fare the better every day they rise?

Seeing wicked men are so ill affected to God and his children, because they love the devil, and he his vassals, and these belong to God; let us herein be like to God our Father, and most unlike wicked men; let us love God's children, and make much of those that fear the Lord, and let us delight in their company; for as the former is a sign of a notorious wicked man, so this is a sign of a godly man. He 'despiseth a vile person, and maketh much of those that fear the Lord,' Ps. xv. 4. Again, 'Herely we know that we love God, if we love the brethren,' 1 John iii. Again, 'All my delight is in the saints, and such as excel in virtue.' Such as be religious, fear God, and live a godly life; these are to be beloved, be they never so poor. It is lamentable to see the course of the world. Let a lewd man come into company,—that is, notorious wicked, an atheist, a blasphemous wretch, one that laughs at God and all goodness, a drunkard, or the like,—this man shall be too welcome, and we will eat and drink, and be merry with him. But let a godly man, a prophet of the Lord, a faithful and zealous minister, come

into our company, we are weary of him, we cannot endure his company, he mars all our mirth, we cannot be merry for him. Thus men say. Oh hell-hounds and wicked wretches! thou mayest as well say, thou canst not be merry when God is present. 'He that despiseth you despiseth me.' These men only delight in the devil and his cursed instruments.

And thus much for the first of the description of a godly man, negatively described. He doth not 'walk in the counsel of the wicked.' He doth not 'stand in the way of sinners,' nor he doth not 'sit in the seat of the scorners.'

Ver. 2. *But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he doth meditate both day and night.*

Hitherto we have heard a godly man described; first, negatively, shewing what evils he doth most carefully shun and avoid. Now he cometh to his description affirmatively, shewing what good things he doth most carefully embrace and follow.

1. In this description, first note the Christian duty and holy practice of a godly and righteous man,—namely, to be much and often in serious and Christian meditation.

2. Secondly, The object of his study, not his pleasures, preferences, or profit, as most carnal men do, which mind nothing but earthly things, but he is conversant in the Holy Scriptures, doth seriously study the word of God, his meditation is concerning the law,—that is, the heavenly doctrine which shews the will of God and his worship, what man must and ought to believe and do to eternal life.

3. Thirdly, The circumstance of times is carefully to be considered, for the godly man doth not now and then, by starts and fits, like a man in an ague, read, study, and meditate the word and doctrine of God, but it is his daily study and continual exercise; not that we should imagine he doth nothing else, but the meaning is, he setteth some time apart daily to serve God, some time to read, some time to hear, and some time to meditate; yea, oftentimes he bestoweth some part of the night, when some be at rest and sleep, and bestoweth it on God's service, setting his mind on heaven and heavenly things.

First, In that the Spirit of Almighty God describeth a godly man, not only by leaving and avoiding lewd company and the counsel of the wicked,

but also by living well and framing himself to study the Scriptures and to lead his life thereafter.

*Doct. 1.* Hence I gather this doctrine, that it is not sufficient for the leading of a godly life, which may both please God and bring comfort to a man's own soul, not to abstain from evil, but he must also do well: not only not to do evil but to do good; it is not enough to prove a man to be a godly man and a sound Christian, that he carefully shun and avoid the lewd counsel and company of wicked men, but he must also be as careful to meditate in the law of God day and night. And therefore, as in this place, so usually in the Holy Scriptures, they are both joined together, 'Cease from evil, learn to do well,' Isa. i. 16. 'Eschew evil and do good, and thou shalt live for ever,' Ps. xxxiv. 'The axe is put to the root of the tree, every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit'—mark, Christ saith not only every tree that is barren and bringeth forth no fruit, good or bad, nor every one that bringeth forth evil fruit, but that bringeth not forth good fruit—is hewn down and cast into the fire,' Mat. iii. 10. And at the last day the Lord will say to the wicked, 'Depart, ye cursed,' not for robbing the poor of meat, drink, or apparel, or casting them out of doors, but for want of shewing mercy unto them. A Christian life doth consist of two parts, so set down by the apostle Paul, 'Abhor that is evil,' there is one half, 'and cleave to that is good,' Rom. xii. 9, there is the other half. If any want the former or the latter he is but half a Christian, and so shall at last come short of a reward. And therefore there is a privilege to all the commandments of God, that where any vice is forbidden the contrary virtue is commanded, and where any virtue is commanded the contrary vice is forbidden. The owner of an orchard is not contented that his trees bear no naughty fruit, but if they bear not good fruit he will hew them down as fuel for the fire. It is not enough for Zacheus that he be no more an extortioner, but if he will become a true convert indeed he must make restitution of that he hath wrongfully gotten, Luke xix. 8. These, and the like examples, make this doctrine apparent unto us. That for the leading of a godly life it is not sufficient that a man do no evil, 'not to walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in

the seat of the scornful;' but he must do good. 'His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate both day and night.'

This seems to improve most men in the world as no godly men indeed, nor sound Christians; for most men do think, if they can say, I thank God I do nobody any harm; I am neither whore nor thief; I am neither blasphemer, drunkard, &c., all is then well, they be as good Christians as the best, and shall as well be saved as the best preacher of them all. Yea, but you see here a godly man must not only abstain from evil, but meditate in the law of God; not only cease from evil, but do good. Look on the places of Scripture before named. Deborah pronounceth a heavy curse against Merosh, not for hurting or hindering the people of God, but because they did not help them against the enemies of God; and so the axe and curse of God shall be upon all those that be not as careful to do good as to eschew evil. St Paul professeth that he was a man of an upright life, and one that was unrebukeable to the world, and yet professeth that all this was but as dung without the righteousness of Christ, Phil. iii. 4. It were good if our civil honest men (as we call them) would consider this; they stand upon this, they defy all the world. Who can say, Black is their eye? they say nobody harm, nor do none. Well, grant that they say, (which is impossible,) though they could abstain from all outward evil, as swearing, lying, drunkenness, whoring, pride, envy, &c., so as no man could lay any of these to their charge, yet here is but a half Christian, but one part of this life, for he must not only shun evil, but do good. Not only to bring forth evil fruit is damnable, but not to bring forth good fruit; and in the day of judgment Christ will proceed against men, not only for doing evil, but especially for not doing good.

Secondly, If such as abstain from gross evils be in danger of damnation for want of doing good, that is to say, because they have not led a godly life, bestowed much time in hearing and reading the Scriptures, praying and calling on God's name, doing works of mercy and equity to men, how much more those that abstain from no evil, but break out into all kinds of wickedness and profaneness. Such as make a mock of religion, and seldom or never come to hear the word preached or taught, but abound in

all kind of sin and iniquity. If the rich man be damned that did not give of his bread to feed the poor, good Lord! what shall become of those that have taken away the bread of the poor, that all their life have drunk down iniquity as it were water? Their damnation doth not sleep; 'if these things be done to the green tree, what shall become of the dry tree?' In a word, if the not doing of good shall be punished so severely, as we have heard, oh, what will then become of those whose lives abound in all manner of sin and impiety, whoredom, drunkenness, &c. ? where shall such sinners as these appear, if the others, which have seemed to have been just and righteous men, shall not be saved? 'Oh, consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none that can deliver you.' Ps. I. 22.

*But his delight is in the law of the Lord.*

That is, the godly man, who is truly blessed and happy, doth wonderfully love, and is greatly affected with the word of Almighty God, and hath exceeding delight and joy in the doctrine of God, because there is revealed the will of God, whereunto men must be careful to frame and conform all their desires, thoughts, words, and deeds, because herein is chalked out and declared, the very highway to eternal life and salvation.

*Doct. 2.* Hence, then, we are taught this doctrine, that it is a special note and property of a godly man to perform Christian duties to God willingly and cheerfully, and to make them his delight and joy.

Indeed it is worthy, yea, thrice worthy to be delighted in, both in regard of the author of this law, which is God, as also in respect of the authority of it, which is manifold. In regard of God the author of it, it is to be delighted in, who is the only true and everlasting God, 'of whom are all things, and we in him,' I Cor. viii. 6. Secondly, in respect of the authority of the same, containing in it perfect wisdom, truth, justice, wisdom, mercy, goodness, &c. It is called by the prophet David 'a perfect law,' Ps. xix. 7; to the which if any man shall presume to add anything, 'God shall add to him the plagues written in this book, and if a man shall diminish anything, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and from the holy city,' Rev. xxii. 18. Here and nowhere else is to be found the true Urim and Thummin; the Urim, that is light, and the

Thummin, that is perfection; and the saints of God in all ages have esteemed highly of it.

Thus did Job, 'I esteemed thy word more than my appointed food;' thus did David when he said, 'Lord what love have I to all thy commandments; all the day long is my study in them.' And David shews his wonderful love and account of it, by the names that he doth give unto it, calling it doctrine, testimonies, commandments, fear, judgments, way, statutes, word, &c. And in another place he saith, that 'it is more desired than gold, yea, than fine gold; that it is sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb.' And this is it which the Lord himself doth require, when he saith, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is Lord only. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' And so the prophet David prayeth, 'O Lord, I beseech thee, accept of the free offerings of my mouth, and teach me thy judgments.' And this is the rule which the apostle St Paul setteth down when he saith, 'As every man wisheth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver.' Now, that which the apostle speaketh of charity and alms, may truly be understood of every Christian duty; when we pray, we must pray unto God cheerfully; when we give thanks to God, we must do it cheerfully; and so of all other duties of God's worship laid down in his word. And indeed this is it which doth put the difference between the godly and the wicked, the service of the one, and the service of the other. Cain will come with his sacrifice as well as Abel, but he brought of the worst, thinking anything to be good enough for God, and this he did very grudgingly. Whereas Abel brought of the best to sacrifice to God, and this he did willingly and cheerfully. And all those duties that are not thus performed, they have no life nor virtue in them, to give them any grace or acceptance with God. So that we see the outward profession is not enough to assure us of our salvation, if it be not joined with sincerity of heart.

*Reason.* Now where it is said here, that the godly man's delight is in the law of the Lord, there is great reason why the children of God should be thus affected to his blessed word and heavenly doctrine above all things in the world, that it should

be 'sweeter unto them than the honey and the honey-comb.'

First, Because it is the bread of life, 'it is the power of God to salvation,' Rom. i. 16. And therefore it is called 'the gospel of the kingdom,' and 'the kingdom of heaven,' Mat. xiii. 44, because it is that whereby men are brought to eternal life, and the kingdom of heaven.

2. Secondly, It is the effectual means and instrument which the Lord useth, and hath appointed to beget all saving grace in the hearts of his children, namely, knowledge, faith, humility, obedience, and the like.

3. Thirdly, It is the bread of life, even the heavenly manna, whereby our faith is confirmed, and our souls comforted, yea, it is the staff whereto we must lean in all dangers, as David saith, 'I had perished in my trouble had it not been for thy word,' Ps. cxix. 'And thy rod and thy staff doth comfort me,' Ps. xxiii.

4. Fourthly, The word of God is that direction whereby we may square all our thoughts, words, and deeds, as David saith, 'Thy word is a lanthorn unto my feet, and a light unto my paths,' Psal. cxix. And without this we cannot live well, but shall wander up and down as blind men in the dark.

5. And last of all, It is the two-edged sword of God's Spirit, whereby we must put to flight all the temptations of the devil, so as we cannot repel them, or withstand them, unless we be skilful and cunning to use this weapon.

*Use 1.* This doctrine may seem to reprove the greatest part amongst us as wicked and ungodly, because generally men have no love unto the word of God, no delight in this heavenly doctrine; it is not sweet nor precious in their eyes, but rather it is irksome and tedious unto them, it is bitter and unsavoury. It fareth with people in these days, as it did with those old people of the Jews: 'Unto whom should I speak and admonish that they may hear? Behold, their ears are uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken unto it; the word of the Lord is a reproach unto them, and they have no delight therein,' Jer. vi. 18. Now that men have no delight to the word of God, which is the very power of God to salvation, it may appear,

First, Because men and women take no delight in

hearing, reading, and meditating on the Word of God. You shall find a great number that will buy other profane books, that will hardly buy the Book of all books, the holy and sacred Bible; and if they buy it, yet they spend no time in perusing of it, in reading and meditating on it. Other books are delightful and pleasant to flesh and blood, and this is the reason they do so much desire them; but, withal, this sheweth that they be carnal, not born anew; for if they were, then would they bestow less time in reading and perusing those profane and unprofitable books, and would bestow more time in reading and meditating on this blessed Book of God; yea, and the small account men make of God's ministers, whom the Lord calls his messengers and ambassadors, yea, the angels of the church.

*Use 2.* Secondly, Seeing all the duties that we owe to God, either of hearing, praying, &c., must be performed of us, not upon compulsion, but willingly and cheerfully, we learn that every action is accounted of by God, not according to the work itself, but according to the affection of the doer. This the Lord himself doth teach, when he saith, 'This people come near me with their mouth and honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me,' Isa. xxix. 13. And therefore were their sacrifices abomination to the Lord, as he again saith in another place, 'I cannot away with your new moon.' And this was it made the poor widow's mite commended above the rest that offered of their superfluity, Luke xxi. 3, 4, 'He that shall give a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of a disciple, he shall not lose his reward.' Alas! what is the bestowing of a mite, a brazen token? or what is a cup of cold water? Are they in themselves anything worth to merit anything at God's hand? No, no, but God acknowledgeth the manner more than the matter; how they are done, more than what is done.

Which may teach us to labour to have our affections tried, that whatsoever we do in the service of Almighty God, may be done in truth and sincerity of heart. This was Job's comfort when he said, 'O Lord, I have esteemed thy word more than my ordinary food.' This was the prophet David's comfort when he could say, 'O how do I love thy law! it is my meditation continually,' Ps. cxix. 97. And this shall be our comfort, when we shall go the way

of all flesh, that we can say with good King Hezekiah, 'Remember, O Lord, that I have walked before thee in truth, and with an upright heart.' That we have not been painted sepulchres, desiring to be accounted righteous before men, but within full of all rottenness and corruption, but have laboured rather to be approved of God.

Oh how ought our hearts and souls to be inflamed in a holy and godly zeal towards the word of God, the law of the Lord here spoken of! Yea, we ought more earnestly to long for the waters of this well of life, than ever David did for the waters of the well of Bethlehem; and when we have tasted how sweet the Lord is, never, oh never, so deal with the Lord as the people of Israel did, which loathed the manna that was sent them from heaven. But much better shall it be for us to cry out with the woman of Samaria, 'Lord, give me to drink of these waters,' John iv. 15; for those waters, being once tasted of, will keep a man that he thirst not again, but shall ever be refreshed by the same to everlasting life.

*Use 3.* Lastly, let us herein labour to manifest our unfeigned love and liking of the word and law of God, even by our obedience thereunto, that we desire to frame our lives thereafter, to obey the doctrine and word of God in heart and life, to be reformed by it, and to be conformed to it. Christ maketh this to be the ear-mark of those that are his sheep, namely this, that they 'hear his voice and follow him.' John x. And again, 'Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, and love me, if ye keep my commandments.' So hereby shall men know that we love the law of God, if we study to keep it, to obey it in heart and life. But if we have in us no care to live hereafter, but break the law of God continually, and rebel against his commandments, how can we be said to love the law of God? If a man should say he loveth the king's laws, and likes them well, and yet should every day break them wittingly and willingly, and be ever playing the traitor, would not all men condemn him as a hypocrite and a liar? So, though most men do say they love the word of God, and delight in his law, yet seeing they do daily break it, and rebel against it wittingly and willingly, by swearing, lying, profaning of the Sabbath, drunkenness, swilling, pride, uncleanness, &c., it is manifest they have no love unto it.

Thus much for the first part, shewing that the godly man is well affected to the heavenly doctrine of the word of God; it is the delight and joy of his heart.

Now in the second part of the verse, the prophet David sheweth the exercise of a godly man, that as in his heart he liketh and loveth the word and heavenly doctrine of the law of God, so in his life he is conversant in the same, his meditations are much spent therein, he is said to meditate therein day and night,—that is, the godly man doth much muse and meditate, often exercising his mind with calling to mind and remembrance the heavenly doctrines, comforts, and instructions of the Word of God; and this he doth, not slightly and carelessly, but seriously and with good advice, and to this end doth evermore set some time apart every day, morning and evening, two times a day at least, for the performance of this godly duty.

*Doth meditate day and night.*

*Doct. 3.* Here we see still, that a godly man, and one that shall be truly blessed, the Lord requireth that he be no stranger, and such a one as seldom, or never searcheth the Scriptures, but that he be much and often exercised in the holy and serious meditations of God's law; in the diligent searching, perusing, and particularly applying of the heavenly doctrine of the word of God. And, indeed, this is here set down as a true fruit of our love to the word, as the love of the word is made a true fruit of a godly man; for as it is impossible a man should be truly religious, and fear God, and yet have no sound love nor delight in the word of God; so it is likewise impossible a man or woman should truly love the word of God in their heart, that seldom, or never bestow any pains in the serious and earnest meditation of the same. David calls God to witness, that the love he bore to the law of God was exceeding great, when he said, 'O how do I love thy law!' Ps. cxix. 97. And in the same verse he seems to prove the same to God, 'It is my meditation continually;' which indeed is a note of true love, to be ever thinking of the thing beloved.

And in very deed, the careful and diligent study, the often and earnest meditation of the word of God, is the very life and strength of all our worship and service of God. For if men should read much,

and never meditate, it would do them no good. If men should hear much and often, and never meditate, they should be little the better. If men should pray much and often, and never meditate, they should find small comfort. If men come often to the sacrament, and do not before and after meditate of the covenant of grace, they should not receive much good thereby. So that you see this meditation is all in all, it puts life to our reading, hearing, praying, receiving, and without it all our reading, hearing, praying, and receiving will stand us in small stead.

For without this meditation this law, which is the word of God, will either in time be forgotten, whereby we shall become unmindful of it, or else it will prove as a talent hid in the ground, utterly unfruitful unto us, for this meditation indeed is the third step of a true convert. The first is to hear the word of God readily; the second to remember it diligently; and the third to meditate on it seriously; and this is compared to the 'chewing of the cud,' Deut. xiv. 6, 7, which is never found in the unclean but in the clean beasts.

True it is, that hearing and reading the word will beget knowledge, but meditation is the especial means to work upon the affection, for else all our knowledge shall only be in general, idle and swimming in the brain, which may well be called brain-knowledge, but no heart-knowledge; but by serious meditation we do apply that we hear to our own selves in particular, laying the doctrine to our own hearts, applying it to ourselves to comfort our sad souls, to humble them for our sins, and to square our lives thereby, that we may in all things keep a clear conscience before God and man. The Lord gives Joshua a strait charge to do thus, 'Let not the book of the law depart out of thy mouth; but meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe and do according to all that is written therein: for then shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and thou shalt have good success,' Joshua i. 8, and Deut. vi. 7, 8. And thus the servants of God have been much exercised in meditation, and thereby have grown wonderful not only in knowledge but in practice, as we may see in David, Ps. cxix., who took great delight in God's law, and made it his meditation continually. And of Isaac it is reported that

he went out into the fields in the evening to meditate, Gen. xxiv.

*Use 1.* This reproves the common fault in the world, that most men utterly neglect this duty, seldom or never settle themselves to meditate in the law of God and his heavenly doctrine. It is hard to find a man or woman that makes any conscience of this duty, to set themselves apart and set themselves in God's presence, to call to mind what they have heard and learned, to apply it to themselves in particular, to humble them or to comfort them. And that is the cause why most men, hearing and reading so much as they have, have yet profited so little in knowledge, faith, repentance, and obedience. They can be content to hear the word preached and taught, and, it may be, now and then to read a chapter, but to think upon it, to ruminate upon the word of God, and, as it were, to chew the cud, to call the same to mind again, to apply it to themselves, to labour to profit by it, this they cannot endure, this they care not for. For if men did carefully meditate of the things they heard and read, how could they be so ignorant in God's word as most be? So void of knowledge, faith, repentance, humility, zeal, patience, and the like gifts and graces which accompany godly and holy meditation? For books of statutes men will not only have them in their houses but at their fingers' end, but Bible they have none. And if they have, it lieth upon the desk or table, and they read it not. And if sometimes they read, yet they never meditate thereon.

*Use 2.* This may admonish all men, as they love their own souls, to make more care and conscience of the performance of this duty, to call to mind that we do hear or read, to think and muse upon it, to chew the cud, to lay it to heart, yea, and to apply it to our own souls and consciences in particular. This is like the rumination or chewing of the cud to be found only in the clean beasts, whereas they which chewed not the cud were unclean, Deut. xiv. 6, 7. This is the mark and property of a godly and blessed man, whereas the not doing it is the mark of a wicked and ungodly man. Let us then remember that we make the word of God our meditation continually. Many men meditate much, some in one thing and some in another, as they are led by fond affection, some thinking of honours, some of plea-

asures, some of riches, some of one thing and some of another. And of these they doat and dream, talk and speak continually. But here we are taught another lesson,—namely, that our minds must especially be set upon the word of God, that must be our delight and the joy of our heart.

The last point of this verse is the circumstance of time,—namely, not by fits. But the godly man keeps a continual course in the study and meditation of the word of God, so as he setteth apart some time for the worship and service of God, at least twice a day, to meditate and study in God's book.

*Doct. 4.* Hence we learn that every one that will live a godly life and so please God, that he may find comfort to his own soul and be blessed in the end, must set some time apart every day for the worship and service of God, to read, pray, and meditate; and at the least twice a day to call upon his name, to read the word of God, and to study therein. This is that the Lord commandeth his people to offer unto him every day, the morning and the evening sacrifice. At the least twice every day they were commanded to worship God, and so the holy patriarchs were wont to worship God morning and evening. So we read in Gen. xxiv. 63, that godly Isaac went out into the fields in the evening to pray or meditate, to make himself fit to pray. And Job rose up early to offer sacrifice, and called his family together; and this did Job every day, Job i. 5. And David in many psalms shewed that he did set some time apart every day to worship God, in praying, reading, meditating, &c. Cornelius 'worshipped God continually,' Acts x. 2, that is every day, according to the rule of the apostle, 'Pray continually,' 1 Thes. v. 17. And that we should not be weary of well-doing, Christ spake the parable of the unjust judge and poor widow to this end, that we ought always to meditate, pray, &c., and not wax faint and weary. Luke xviii. 1. The meaning is, not that men should leave their callings and other business altogether to attend upon hearing, reading, meditating, &c., but that we should be much and often in meditating, in prayer, in reading, &c., and in performing these blessed duties unto Almighty God; and at the least three times a day to pray and call upon the name of God: in the morning when we do rise, to give unto God hearty thanks for keeping us

the night past, and to crave for a blessing at his hands over the day following. At noon again, even when we receive his good creatures; and at night when we go to rest. And this godly practice the word of God prescribes us, and the examples of the godly do teach us. Daniel prayed three times a day upon his knees to God and praised him, as his manner was, though the king had made a strict law against it, Dan. vi. 10. 'Evening, morning, and at noon will I pray unto thee,' Ps. lv. 17. And again, 'Seven times a day will I praise thee,' Ps. cxix. 164; that is, many times. For the morning, 'Early in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee;' and thus did Abraham, Isaac, Job, Gen. xxii. 2; Job xv. Secondly, at noon or mid-day, so did Peter. 'Peter went out to pray about the sixth hour,' Acts x. 9; that is, about twelve o'clock, or noontide. Thirdly, at night; in the evening when we go to bed to take our rest we must then remember likewise to render the Lord thanks for the comfort of the day, and to crave his blessing for that night. Neither is this all, but in the night time, when sleep is departed from a man, and nature is sufficed with rest, he doth even then call to mind the heavenly doctrine of the word of God, and doth muse and meditate therein, as the text saith here, even 'day and night.' For God, which hath bounded the day with the night, hath set no bounds to a godly man's meditations. It is nothing to be, first, one that heareth the word; secondly, one that receives it; thirdly, with joy; if, fourthly, it shall be but for a time only, if he shall not also continue and constantly persevere to meditate therein day and night.

So as we see this our duty, to set some time apart every day to worship God, as to hear, read, pray, meditate, &c. We see men do set apart, depute, and ordain some certain time every day for the food of the body, at the least twice a day, to eat and drink; how much more then should we be careful for our souls every day to read, meditate, and to pray? Of all the time we spend in this world, none will be more comfortable unto us in death, when we shall go the way of all flesh, than that which we have bestowed in the service and worship of Almighty God.

There is not now one hour spent in the service of God but will then minister cause of joy and rejoicing; neither is there now one hour spent in the ser-

vice of sin and Satan, but the remembrance thereof will then be a terror unto the soul. 'Oh that men would be wise, then would they understand this, they would consider their latter end,' Deut. xxxii. 29.

*Use 1.* This seems to reprove the common carelessness of the world. Most men and women spend all their days in delights and vanities, in sports and pastimes, in seraping and raking together the things of this life, and in the meantime find no time at all to serve God; that in twenty-four hours hardly can spare one to serve God, one to read, hear, pray, meditate; yea, how many be there that never open their books to read one chapter in the Bible all the week long! How many be there that never spend one quarter of an hour in meditation, which never call upon God from Sunday to Sunday! Doth not this prove men to be carnal and ungodly? Do not these men do nothing of conscience, or with delight and love to God and his worship, but all for fashion's sake, or for fear of the law? What difference is there betwixt those men, who seldom or never call upon the name of God, and the beast they ride on? The beast arises in the morning out of his den and strokes himself, goes to his meat, and so to work. Even so do they never call on the name of God. In this thing wherein do such men differ from a very beast? How can such look for any blessing from God upon their labours? yea, how can they choose but fear some fearful judgment and curse of God to overtake them? And no doubt the cause why many ride and run early and late—do not call on God for a blessing upon their endeavours—cannot prosper and thrive in the world; no, God sends sometimes judgments, plagues, and punishments upon them, and all for the neglect of this godly and Christian duty; it is just with God both to cross and to curse both them and their labours, Ps. xiv.

*Note.* Again, by the rule of this doctrine they are no less to be reprov'd, which can be content now and then to hear, read, pray, and meditate, &c.; but this must be at their leisure, when they have nothing else to do. But to keep certain times, morning, noons, evenings, to leave all sports, pastimes, delights, and business, to go to God and serve him, and call upon his name; they cannot abide that, they will not be so tied and retained; but as the man in

the Gospel, when Christ called him; first he must go bury his father; and him that would go bid his friends far-well; so many could be content to serve God, and to pray unto him, but they must keep their friends company. Or as these that were bidden to the feast; one hath his oxen and gain to hinder him, another his wife, his pleasures and delights, which he is married unto, and so can find no time to serve God; even the least thing in the world is matter sufficient to hinder them from serving of God; these men shew that they find no comfort at all in the service of Almighty God, no good, no fruit, no benefit; for if they did, they would not be such strangers unto it.

*Use 2.* Let every one be exhorted and stirred unto this duty, if we have not begun, now to begin, and in the fear of the Lord to imitate God's children, as David and the rest. Let us set some time apart every day for the word and prayer, else we shall never prove ourselves good Christians, else we should never find true comfort, else we can never look for God's blessings upon us; let us then set apart some of our idle time, that we bestow in talking, in walking, in playing, in vain delights, or else idly, and bestow it on God's service and worship, in hearing, reading, praying, meditating, &c. David early in the morning prevented the daylight, yea, at midnight would he be so busied. The eunuch in his journey was reading the Scriptures. Let us then never arise in the morning, or go to bed, but as duly let us ever be mindful of this duty. Let us not misspend our precious time. Let us (I pray you) consider why we live here in the world, not to spend and consume our time in toys and vanities, but serve God, and to seek for comfort and salvation unto our own souls. Let us therefore so spend it as we may have comfort in the end.

*Use 3.* Last of all, we are here exhorted to be very careful, after we have begun a good course in godliness, to persevere and to continue in the same, day and night, even unto the end; not only in the day-time of prosperity, but in the night-time of adversity, for unto God 'The day and night are both alike,' Ps. cxxxix. 12. Many make a fair beginning, but the end is very fearful and dangerous. Many lay their hands to the Lord's plough, but in the end they look back, Luke ix. 62. Lot's wife seems as



forward as her husband; she goes out of Sodom as well as he, she takes her journey with her husband, but she did not continue and hold out unto the end; but looks back, contrary unto the commandment of God, and so was turned into a pillar of salt. And she being made a spectacle to all backsliders; our Saviour put us in mind of her, when he saith, 'Remember Lot's wife,' Luke xvii. 32. And Paul, when he had preached the resurrection of Christ, Agrippa said unto him, 'Thou persuadest me almost to become a Christian,' Acts xxvi. 28. But there he stayed and rested, and would proceed no further. These are fearful examples; it had been better for such 'they had never known the way of righteousness,' 2 Peter ii. 21; for indeed in a Christian race there is no standing at one stay, for not to go forward in religion is to go backward.

And thus much for the description of a godly man affirmatively, shewing what he doth carefully embrace and follow. 'But his delight is in the law of the Lord,' &c.

Ver. 3. *He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters, that will bring forth her fruit in due season, whose leaf shall not fade, so whatsoever he shall do, shall prosper.*

Hitherto the prophet David hath described to us a godly and righteous man, such a man is truly blessed; both negatively shewing what be the evils he must very carefully shun and avoid, as also affirmatively, by those virtues and holy duties which he doth carefully embrace and follow.

Now in this verse the prophet proceeds to set out the happiness of a godly man, or wherein his happiness doth consist. And this doth he, first, by similitude, comparing him unto a pleasant, fruitful, and flourishing tree; secondly, by that blessed success God gives unto a godly man, in the end of this verse.

The precedent part of the verse, the similitude itself, it hath in it these parts:—

First, whereunto the godly man is compared, to a tree.

Secondly, the nature of this tree is described; not every common or trivial tree, but such a tree, which for the original of it, *planted*; secondly, for the situation of it, *by the rivers of waters*; thirdly, for the

propriety of it, *that will bring forth her fruit in due season*: fourthly, by a contrary property, *whose leaf shall not fade*.

First, then, observe by this similitude, that man is compared to a tree, and in three things especially,—the shape, the growth, and the state of a tree.

1. Man may well be compared to a tree in respect of his shape; for as a tree consists of the root, the stock, and the boughs, or branches, even so doth man, this mystical tree. He hath his head, which is the root, and hair as small roots, his body as the stock, and his arms and legs as so many boughs, and fingers and toes as lesser twigs. Only the difference between the natural tree, and man this mystical tree, is this: the natural tree is rooted in the earth, receiving as Esau's blessing the fatness of the same, Gen. xxvii. 28; but man, this heavenly plant, derives not his juice and nourishment from the fatness of the earth, but from heaven above, according to God's wise disposing of his root, which is above, not below. And therefore are we exhorted by the apostle to 'set our affections on heavenly things, and not on things here below;' for we through Christ are made partakers of the divine nature, in heaven therefore must our conversation be, 2 Pet. i. 4.

2. Secondly, Man may be said to be like a tree in respect of his growth; for a tree at first is flexible by nature, and so by degrees, a little and a little, grows to be stronger and stronger, till it come to perfection, and then again begins to wither and dry up. So fareth it with man, this mystical tree: while he is in the state of infancy, he is a tender twig, and his mind is as flexible as a twig; easily inclined to virtue, if he be accordingly educated; or else to vice, if the same be neglected,—an excellent caveat to all parents and governors of youth, that they take a due time of correcting and educating of these tender plants—namely, to bend the tree while it is a twig; for if it be suffered it will grow to be careless. And as man is like to a tree in respect of his infancy and tender age, so in respect of his decrepit old age; for when the tree is once come to his perfection in growth, it then decays and declines. So fareth it with man; let him seem to be as tall and as straight as a cedar tree, he must become a shrub again, and stoop to age. For man's life is well compared to a day, whose evening will most certainly follow his

morning, until the night of death cause him to sleep in the grave; for as 'there is a time to be born, so there is a time to die,' Eccles. iii. 2. Be it that thou now seemest to be as strong as the oak, and as tall as the cedar, as flourishing as the bay-tree, yet at last rottenness will creep into the strongest oak, and strength and tallness will be abated on thee, 'When the keepers of the house shall tremble,' &c., Eccles. xii. 3.

3. Thirdly, Man may be compared to a tree in respect of the state of a tree, and that divers ways.

(1.) First, As the tallest cedar is in greatest danger of wind and weather, even so the man that is tall, either in place of authority, riches, honour, or the like, is most subject to the assault of Satan, and rage of the wicked.<sup>1</sup> And men of such excellent places in church or commonwealth, are more subject to changes, disfavours, to envy, insurrections, poisonings, murderings, as to so many raging winds; whereas those that, with little David, tend the ewes great with young, are free from these assaults.

(2.) Secondly, it is commonly seen, the more evil<sup>2</sup> the tree is, the less fruitful. So farth it with man naturally; unless men be seasoned with grace, riches, honour, dignity, or the like, are great occasions of a high mind, and a high mind is like unto a mountain, which the higher it is, the more barren it is. Whereas if he be mean, and simple of spirit, he may fitly be compared to the valleys, which are ever fruitful, and, as the Psalmist saith, stand thick of corn; for humility is the groundwork of Christian virtues, and pride the root of all evil, and the queen of all vice.

(3.) Thirdly, and lastly, The end of every tree is to become either timber for building, or fuel for burning. So farth it with man, this mystical tree: when death cometh, which is God's axe by the which he doth cut us down, he becometh either timber for the Lord's house,—when this earthly tabernacle shall be destroyed, to be a building not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens; or else, alas! but fuel for the fire of God's wrath, even in Tophet, where there is fire and much wood, and where the Lord's wrath, as the bellows, shall never cease blowing and kindling the flame.

It is here first of all to be noted that the Spirit of

<sup>1</sup> *Loca quae aliis celsa, ipsis prerupta videntur.—Seneca.*

<sup>2</sup> Query, "tall" ?—*Ed.*

God sets out the happiness of a godly man by comparing him to a goodly green tree. Hence we learn first of all that it is not only lawful but a commendable and profitable kind of teaching, for God's ministers to illustrate points of doctrine by similitudes and comparisons, so that they be familiar, and fit to make the people conceive what they teach, and to raise comparisons from the plough and ploughshare to that end, that even the simplest in a congregation may understand what is said and what is taught. This was the course of the prophets from time to time in their sermons to the people. This was the course of our Saviour himself, who in all his sermons used both parables and similitudes, comparing good men to good trees, and bad men to bad trees, comparing himself to a vine, the Father to a husbandman, us to branches, himself to a shepherd, we to sheep, and the word to twenty things, as seed, mustard-seed, &c. To teach all those that are God's ministers that, when they preach unto their people, that they lay not up their speech in a mist of words, but so to deliver it as that the meanest and shallowest amongst the hearers may understand it. Thence came the profession of Paul, 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus our Lord,' 2 Cor. iv. 5. And hence came that worthy resolution of his, 'I had rather in the church to speak five words, &c., that I might instruct others, than ten thousand words in a strange tongue,' 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

In which words by 'strange tongue' we are not simply to understand Hebrew, Greek, Latin, &c., but by speaking of the mother-tongue in a strange manner. Preachers are fitly compared to a nurse: a nurse doth half chew the meat to the little one, and doth babble unto them in their own stammering tongue: so must preachers proportion their doctrine to their hearers' capacity, and fit his tongue to their understanding.

This may serve to reprove such kind of preachers who seek not to preach Christ crucified, but preach themselves, even such as in handling the word of God and preaching the gospel seek to show their own learning, wit, art, and memory, and so indeed preach not Christ but themselves, like the old Pharisees, 'Loving the praise of men more than the praise of God.' But what, shall David, the prophet of the Lord, or rather the Spirit of God in him stoop so

low as to speak to the understanding of all men by similitudes, comparisons, and the like? And shall sinful man, a worm of the earth, exalt himself above God, to seek only to tickle itching ears with the words of man's wisdom?

*Use 2.* Seeing God's ministers must be faithful teachers of the truth of God, and must deliver the same in the plain evidence of the Spirit, not with the enticing words of men's wisdom, this serves to direct the hearers in the art of hearing. They must submit themselves to God's ordinance, and be ready to know the will of God; we must not have itching ears, that are not able to suffer wholesome doctrine, like the Gentiles who despised the preaching of the apostles because it was not styled with man's painted eloquence, esteeming it foolishness. What is this but to stint the Spirit, and to teach the Lord to speak? prescribing the minister what he shall say, and restraining our hearing what we will hear? What, then, will follow, but that we shall hear without fruit, and the word to be unto us only a savour of death unto death?

*Doct. 2.* Hence we observe here a second point of doctrine, that seeing the prophet compareth a godly man to a tree, that of all the creatures of God there is a double use, one natural, the other spiritual; as a tree in nature signifies such plants of the earth as bring forth fruit according to their kind. Now, besides this natural signification, it serves to put us in mind what we ought to be,—namely, fruitful trees in the Lord's orchard, lest if we be barren or bad we prove fuel for the fire, Mat. iii. 10. A man having a tree in his orchard, if it bringeth forth nothing but leaves, he will cut it, and prune it, and dung it, but if, after all this cost and labour, it remain still barren, he will then hew it down, as good for nothing but fuel for the fire. Hereby we may see how God will deal with us. We be all trees here planted in the Lord's orchard, he doth water us with the preaching of the word, he cuts us and prunes us. Now, if after much cost and labour we shall remain barren still, if the Lord come three or four years and still no fruit will be found, he will then bethink him to stub us up that we cover not the ground, Isa. v.; Luke viii. 4, 5. So by sowing of corn into the ground to maintain man's life, our Saviour leads us to consider of another thing: for as the sower

casts his seed abroad into sundry sorts of ground, and they according to their nature bring forth fruit accordingly, even so the minister of the word scatters and sows the seed of God's word into the ground of men's hearts, and as they be prepared so they bring forth fruit. So by a weaver's shuttle we see the shortness of man's life, gone in a moment. Dost thou see how the wind drives the chaff and dust of the earth about, giving it no rest until it be clean dispersed away? Oh consider then how the curse of God shall follow and torment the wicked, and never let their souls be at rest till it consume them; ver. 4 of this Psalm. Dost thou lie down into thy bed every night? oh remember that thou must shortly lie down in thy grave, be covered with dust, and therefore prepare to die in the Lord. Dost thou see the beautiful grass and herbs of the earth cut down and wither away? so thy beauty and riches shall fade and perish. When thou seest a stinking carrion, there behold a picture of thine own self, for no carrion is so loathsome to a man as a rebellious sinner to God. Dost thou put on thy clothes to cover thy nakedness? oh labour for the precious robes of Christ's righteousness, 'That thy filthy nakedness do not appear,' Rev. iii. 18. Dost thou but wash thy hands in water? oh labour for the blood of Jesus Christ to wash away the spots of thy sins, Ps. li. 7. Dost thou but sit down to eat and to drink to nourish thy body, without which it could not live? oh consider that thy soul doth much more stand in need of the bread of life, the food of thy soul. Dost thou see sometimes brimstone burning? oh consider and quake for fear of the dreadful judgment of God upon Sodom and Gomorrah, that were burned with fire and brimstone, Gen. xix., and how all sinners shall have their portion in the 'lake of fire and brimstone.' Dost thou but take a book into thy hand and open it leaf by leaf? oh consider that the time will come when the 'books of thy conscience shall be opened,' Rev. xx., wherein all thy sins are written one by one, and thou shalt then receive according to thy works. And thus we see that of all the creatures of God there is a double use to be made of them: the one natural, the other spiritual: one temporal, the other eternal.

*He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.*

This part of the similitude doth signify unto us

our implanting and ingrafting into Jesus Christ his mystical body, by the work of God's Spirit, and by the means of a true and lively faith.

This word *planted* it is a metaphorical speech, and borrowed from the practice of husbandmen, who first take up their plants out of the nursery, or place where they first spring up, and then plant them in the orchard or vineyard; so fareth it with man, this heavenly plant. And the comparison holds good in divers things:—

1. First, for the circumstance of time when the plants of the earth are thus removed, and that not usually in summer, when the heat of the year is up, and the sap is gone up into the plant, but in the winter time; this is usually to be seen for the most part. Even so, the time in the which the godly man is planted it is the winter time,—that is, the time of sorrow and sore affliction, not in the summer of peace, when all things outwardly may seem to go well with a man, and he saith, Peace, peace! but when God doth give unto a man the sight of his sin, and lets him see the reward of sin, even eternal death. Oh, when a man's sins do thus muster themselves before him and against him! oh, this winter time, this time of affliction and sorrow! now is the season of the removing of his heavenly plant, man.

2. Secondly, as a plant is removed, not when it is fruitful, but removed to that end it may be fruitful; so fareth it with man, this mystical tree. We are not fruitful by nature, before such time as we are planted and ingrafted into Jesus Christ, for till then we bring forth nothing but bitter and unsavoury fruit; but we are planted to that end we may be fruitful, and being once in Christ, we shall then, as living plants of that lively stock, bring forth fruit incontinently.

In particular, this planting hath in it two things: 1. Plucking up; 2. Setting down.

1. The plucking up shadows out unto us three things in the conversion of a sinner:—

(1.) First, Our separation from the world. He cannot be in Christ that hath his rooting still in the earth, amongst the men of the world; and therefore, as we have heard before, we must be careful that we 'walk not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of

the scornful.' They are so many noisome shrubs that will be ready to fret the tender plants of the Lord and to annoy them; and therefore we must be removed from amongst them,—that is, must have no secret society with them.

(2.) Secondly, It signifies our deliverance from the power of original sin thus: for as a plant once removed receives no more juice nor nourishment from the old earth from which it is removed, but from that soil into the which it is planted; so fareth it with this heavenly plant, being regenerate and ingrafted in Jesus Christ, there will follow such a change of will, affection, understanding, and the like faculties of soul and body, that whereas before they were altogether earthly, carnal, and vain, so now they mind heavenly things, being sanctified by the spirit of grace and the power of nature,—that is, that old sap of sin being done away.

(3.) Thirdly, It signifieth a Christian man's sorrow for sin: for as no plant can be removed from one place to another but the axe and other instruments of the husbandman must be laid unto it, and many a root must be cut off before it can be removed; so fareth it with man, this heavenly plant. The Lord's husbandmen, which are his ministers, they must bring the axe of God's word, and lay the same to the root of our consciences, and we must have many an unprofitable sprout of nature cut off before we can be taken out of nature and ingrafted into Jesus Christ; the roots,—that is, thy affections that have taken such deep rooting into thy profits, into thy pleasures, and the like,—all these must be cut off before thou canst be planted into Christ.

*Doct. 3.* Hence mark, in that the prophet David compares a godly man thus to a tree, not wild, but planted, and that by the rivers of water, and that this a sign of our insition or ingrafting into Christ his mystical body, whereby we are made members of the same. Hence I say we are taught that all men out of Christ are miserable, only they be blessed that be united unto Jesus Christ and ingrafted into his mystical body. Our Saviour speaketh of this when he compares his Father to a husbandman, himself to a vine, and all of us to branches. Now he shews that those that be ingrafted into him, that they be but dead and withered boughs, and therefore they must be burned in the

fire, John xv. 1, 2. We are all by nature wild olives, Rom. xi., that bring forth nothing but sour and unsavoury fruit, till we be transplanted by the Spirit of God, and ingrafted into the sweet olive Jesus Christ. We see this plain by common experience. Take a scion from a tree, and unless it be ingrafted into another stock, it will die and never bear fruit; so unless we be grafted into Jesus Christ by faith and the Spirit of God, we must needs wither and come to nothing, but prove fuel for the fire of God's vengeance. And Paul, showing the estate of all men by nature out of Christ, saith, Eph. ii. 1-3, that we are all 'dead in trespasses and sins;' 'the children of wrath;' yea, the very vassals of the devil and limbs of Satan, heirs of God's vengeance and eternal damnation, we are 'without God in the world, strangers from the common-weal of Israel,' in a cursed and damnable estate. 'Unless a man be born anew he can never enter into the kingdom of heaven,' John iii. 3, 5. Yea, the devil is called the god of the world, because men by nature are his vassals and slaves, he reigns and rules in them. We are in the devil's claws, and taken in his snares to do his will. This is the common slavery of all,—high, low, rich, poor, noble, and simple. Let men boast never so much in outward respects, as sometimes the Jews did, 'we are never bound to any'; yet, until the Son of Righteousness, Christ Jesus, do make them free, this is their captivity. We read in what an intolerable bondage the people of Israel were in, in Egypt under Pharaoh; but it can in no way figure out unto us the miserable slavery and bondage that every man is in under the spiritual Pharaoh, Satan; for here the soul, the will, the affection, and all, are captived and held in his snares, to do his will.

*Use 1.* The use hereof may serve to humble us, and to cause the lofty to strike sail, which joy so much in outward things—riches, honour, beauty, strength, authority, &c. Alas! what of all these, when in the meantime thou thyself art but a slave unto sin and Satan, a dead and withered tree reserved for the fire of God's wrath: eternal death is thy surest inheritance. If thou hast thy right, what canst thou expect but the fire of hell? It is nature's desert, and that which nature doth aim at. Why art thou then, O man, so secure when thy sins have

cast thee into such a dismal estate? Oh let us labour to come out of it. Let us not suffer our eyes to sleep, nor our eyelids to slumber, till we have got the assurance that we are taken out of the state of nature into the state of grace, and to be by faith ingrafted into this true stock Christ Jesus.

*Use 2.* Secondly, this shows that all those that live and die in the estate of nature unregenerate, not born anew, not ingrafted into Jesus Christ, must needs perish, and be damned for ever. The apostle shews that all men by nature be stark dead in trespasses and sins, and that all by nature are the children of wrath, as well as others—high, low, rich, and poor; old, young, learned, and unlearned. This is that our Saviour saith, Luke xiii. 5, 'Unless ye repent, ye shall all perish.' And again, John xv. 6, 'If any man abide not in me, he is cast off as a withered branch; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they burn.' Oh, how should this admonish all men to look about them! It is wonderful to see how men go on from day to day, securely in their sins, and neither think of heaven nor hell, but persevere and continue in their ignorance, unbelief, and hardness of heart, in swearing, contempt of the word, profaning the Sabbath, in lying, stealing, adultery, &c. 'Oh, consider this, ye that forget God!' Oh, consider the woeful and fearful estate of all such as live and die out of Christ, in the estate of nature. They must needs perish, and for ever be damned. Oh, think of this, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things, that every day thou risest thou art in danger to lose thy own soul; and therefore lay this doctrine to heart, and know that it is not good to dally in such points. God will not be mocked. And therefore now begin to repent and turn unto God while it is called to-day. Defer no longer, but repent and seek to be reconciled to God while it is called to-day.

The second part of this doctrine is, that as all those that be out of Christ are miserable and cursed, and if they live and die in the estate of nature, cannot be saved; so, on the other side, all those that are regenerate, and born anew, that be ingrafted into Jesus Christ by faith and the Spirit of God, so as they be the true and lively members of Christ his mystical body, they are blessed and happy. Now that these are blessed, it may appear in that blessed

prayer Christ made a little before his passion. He begs this at his Father's hand, that all the elect might be 'one in him, and he in them.' And this he begs often and earnest unto his Father for, which shews that it is a matter of endless moment and great importance. Now that such as be one with Christ are truly blessed, let us consider a little what great and incomparable benefits we receive by this our planting and ingrafting into Christ his mystical body.

First, hereby it comes to pass that every true believer hath sweet union and communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. So as God the Father loves him as his child, takes care of him, doth bless him, and provides a kingdom for him; so God the Holy Ghost is his comforter in all estates. So as he is now the child of God, hath Jesus Christ to his elder brother, and all the angels in heaven have charge over him.

Secondly, every true and lively member of Jesus Christ is reconciled to God, and justified in his sight, so as he hath the pardon and remission of his sins in the blood of Jesus Christ bestowed upon him, against whose faith the gates of hell shall never prevail.

Thirdly, every true and lively member of Jesus Christ is partaker of all the merits of Christ's sufferings and obedience, as if he had done them in his own person; Christ's merits be his merits; Christ's death is his death; Christ's righteousness is his righteousness; so as God will not call him to account for his sins, or look on him as he is in himself; but wash his sins away in the blood of his Son, and behold him as he is, covered with Christ's own righteousness and obedience.

And hence we have three wonderful benefits that we are ingrafted into Jesus Christ. There be three things which make every man miserable in God's sight.

First, the guiltiness of sin, whereby every sinner stands bound to undergo and suffer the curse of God for his sins and breach of his holy law.

Secondly, the corruption and filthiness of sin, which makes a man more loathsome than a toad or a serpent in God's sight; so as this makes a man abominable, and all he doth exceeding loathsome.

Thirdly, there is the everlasting curse of God due

unto us for sin, which a carnal and unregenerate man is in danger of every day and hour, and which shall one day as certainly be executed upon the wicked as now they live.

Now in Jesus Christ, by being united to him, and being members of his mystical body, we have three wonderful remedies against these three fearful miseries.

First, For the bond of obligation against us, 'He hath taken it away, and nailed it to his cross,' Col. ii. 14, and crossed and cancelled the same with his own heart's blood.

Secondly, For the stinking filthiness and corruption of sin, Christ hath both perfectly obeyed the law for us, and also covered us in his own righteousness, as Jacob in Esau's garment.

Thirdly, For the most just and intolerable punishment, he stood in our stead upon the cross, and paid the full price and punishment for our sins; for when Christ suffered in our stead, it was as much as if we had suffered.

The fourth main benefit which every godly man hath, by being one with Christ, is sanctification; which is a wonderful and supernatural work of God's holy spirit, whereby every godly man, that is a true and lively member of Jesus Christ, is freed both in mind, will, and affection from the bondage and slavery of sin and Satan, and is by little and little enabled and strengthened by the Spirit of God, to will, desire, and approve that which is good and holy, and to walk in it.

And this sanctification hath two parts, mortification and vivification; by the former, sin is every day more and more mortified, weakened and consumed. By the latter, inherent righteousness is put into them, whereby they walk with God in newness of life.

Now both these parts of sanctification are wrought after this manner. First, after the Christian man is united to Christ, planted into him as into a stock, and become a living member of his mystical body, Christ Jesus then by his Spirit works in him two blessed works.

First, The godly man ingrafted into Jesus Christ, receives power and strength from the death of Christ to die to all sin. So as the power of Christ's death and passion doth kill sin, and mortify their corruptions, 'For as many as are baptized into Jesus

Christ, are baptized into the similitude of his death,' Rom. vi. 4. So as the death of Christ is as a corrosive to eat up and to consume all rotten flesh and corruptions of our hearts, it eats our sin and frets it away by little and little, till it be utterly abolished by death, when our sanctification shall be perfected.

Secondly, every godly man receiveth power and strength from Christ's resurrection to rise out of the grave of sin to newness of life, to walk with God in holiness and righteousness. Even as we see all the parts of the body, being joined to the head, receive life and motion from it. Even so every Christian, as so many parts and members of Christ Jesus the head, receive from him spiritual life and motion, whereby they walk with God in new obedience.

*Use 1.* This doctrine doth first of all condemn the doctrine of the adversary, that man hath free will in himself. We see here, that this mystical tree, man, must be planted, he cannot plant himself. Indeed, man at his first creation had free-will himself, but since his fall, that blessing is now fallen away and utterly lost in man, and the proof of this point may appear unto us, if we will rest upon the testimony of God himself, who professeth thus of man, that 'The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth up.' Now what good can be willed of him who is first evil? Secondly, whose heart is a fountain of all evil. Thirdly, whose imaginations, as streams of that fountain, are evil, and that not for a time, but ever from his youth up. So that now since the fall of man, the freedom of man's will to goodness is so enthralled and eclipsed, as that of ourselves we cannot plant ourselves into grace, or into Christ; for we are as trees, not planting ourselves, but must be planted by God, for 'he shall be as a tree planted.'

*Use 2.* This magnifieth the free grace of God above man's free-will or merit; for whereas we do fail to plant ourselves, yet, as it appeareth by the text, we are planted. It is the Lord that must work in us both the will and the deed; he must turn himself unto us, before we can turn unto him. This is acknowledged by the prophet Daniel in that worthy prayer of his when he saith, 'Compassion and forgiveness is in the Lord our God, albeit we have sinned against him,' Dan. ix. 9. This is taught by the apostle when he saith, that 'Eternal

life is the free gift of God,' Rom. vi. 23. Yea, our Saviour Jesus Christ himself doth confirm the truth of this when he saith, 'Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.' Yea it is worth our best observation, that the whole work of man's salvation is called by the name of the work of grace or of mercy. And therefore on what part soever we cast our eyes, we shall see the free grace and mercy of God. Begin we at the foundation of all, God's eternal election, and come from thence to the period of all, man's glorification, and still ask the question from what root each part springeth; the answer must be, from the free grace and mercy of God. It was the free grace and mercy of God that he should elect us. It was the free grace and mercy of God, that he should send Christ to redeem us. It was the free grace and mercy of God that he should call us, that he should justify us, that he should sanctify us; and what can it be but the free grace and mercy of God, that we shall be admitted to 'an inheritance immortal and undefiled?' 1 Pet. i. 4. So that we see here in the whole work of man's redemption by Christ, there is no footing left for human merit; for the free grace and mercy of God and man's righteousness cannot possibly stand together, they will never admit any composition, and therefore we must conclude for the whole work of man's redemption, and say, 'Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the glory.'

*Use 3.* Lastly, seeing all men out of Christ be miserable, and those only that be in Christ be blessed, let us labour while we live to be assured of this, that we are regenerate, that we are the true and lively members of Jesus Christ. All men say they hope to be saved; but those that be planted and ingrafted into him, none but they that be regenerate and born anew, none but such as do repent and believe in Christ Jesus, and be the true lively members of his mystical body [shall be saved.]

And to the end that we be not deceived in so weighty a matter, but that we may assuredly know whether Christ dwell in our hearts by his Spirit, and we dwell in him by faith, so as we be true and lively members of his mystical body; let us try it by those two ways: first, by the power of Christ's death; secondly, by his resurrection. If thou

be a member of Christ thou shalt find the power of Christ's death daily crucifying the old man, and eating out the corruption of thy nature. For as we see in a man's body, when there is much dead flesh in a wound, they lay corrosive medicines to it to eat it out; so the death of Jesus Christ applied to our hearts by faith fret and eat out as corrosive the corruption of nature, our dead flesh. So as Christ by his death maketh all his members die unto sin, so as they cannot live in the bondage and slavery of sin.

Now, then, prove yourselves, your hope to be saved by Christ Jesus. But be not deceived, Christ died for none but such as be united to him, his true and lively members. And none are his members but such as find and feel the power of his death, to mortify, kill, and weaken the power of sin and natural corruption. Do you then find sin to die in you? Do you find the strength of your corruption to be abated, the heat of it to be allayed? Do you feel Christ's death fretting it out, so as we can say, I hate sin, I abhor sin; it is as bitter as wormwood unto me? Do you find this change in your lives that you do leave your old sins, labouring to get out of ignorance, to leave swearing, lying, stealing, drinking, whoring, &c.? Then your case is good, it is an evident token that you are ingrafted into Jesus Christ. But if, on the contrary part, you find that sin is as strong now as ever it was, and that you are the same now that you were seven years ago, not dying to sin and rising to newness of life; oh, deceive not your own souls any longer, your case as yet is fearful, you be not the lively members of Jesus Christ, but wild olives, wild branches, good for nothing but fuel for the fire.

*Which bringeth forth her fruit in due season.*

This is the second property of that tree whereunto a godly man is compared, namely, as it is well planted and seated by the river's side, where it hath continual juice and nourishment, and it is well watered. Even so likewise it is fruitful and yieldeth sweet and pleasant fruit to him that planted it,<sup>3</sup> and that in due season; even so the godly man being ingrafted into Jesus Christ, as by a river's side, and

being a lively member of his mystical body, he bringeth forth much good and pleasant fruit, and that in due season, whenas it may best stand for the glory of God and the good of man.

*Doct. 5.* Here we see then who are the true and lively members of Jesus Christ, who is a true godly man, and who is planted as this good tree in Jesus Christ the true vine, namely, such as be careful and endeavour themselves continually to bring forth the blessed fruit of a godly and Christian life. 'Every tree is known by his fruit.' A tree is not known by his rind, or bark, nor branches, nor yet by his leaves, but 'every tree is known by his fruit, Mat. xii. 34. A good tree cannot but bring forth good fruit, and a bad tree cannot but bring forth bad fruit; so every man is known by his fruit. He that is a godly man, and a true and lively member of Jesus Christ, cannot but bring forth good fruit, even the fruit of good works and a godly life. So a wicked man cannot but bring forth bad fruit, the works of darkness, of a wicked and ungodly life. We see if a graft or scion be set into a good stock and take a right it will appear by the yielding of fruit; but if it do not prosper, then it withers and dries, and is good for nothing but for fire. So if any man seem to be a Christian, and to be a member of Christ Jesus, and yet bring not forth good fruit, surely his estate is fearful; while he is unfruitful, he must be pulled away as a withered branch, and to the fire he must go. A true Christian must not be like the tree which Christ Jesus cursed, which had leaves and no fruit, Mat. xxi. 19, but he must be like to the tree planted by the river's side, 'that will bring forth fruit in due season;' yea, that which is more, they 'bring forth fruit in their age,' Ps. xcii. 14, whereas evil men, as the apostle St Paul saith, 2 Tim. iii. 13, 'wax worse and worse,' and fall away from God daily more and more. This was the sum of the doctrine of John Baptist to his hearers, that they would 'bring forth fruit worthy amendment of life,' Mat. iii. 8. And the like is used by the apostle, 'Let your conversation be such as becometh the gospel of Christ,' Phil. i. 27. Again, 'Follow holiness, without which no man shall see God,' Heb. xii. 14. 'Herein' (saith our Saviour Christ, in the Gospel of St John xv. 8) 'is my father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and

<sup>3</sup> This tree whereunto the godly man is compared is most like to be the palm-tree.—*Moter.* in Ps. i. Palma gaudet riguis totoque animo bibere gaudet.—*Pli.* lib. xiii. 4.



become my disciples.' And we know how Almighty God did plead this cause with the people of Israel, even in their unfruitfulness, notwithstanding his great cost and pains about them. This is the hope of the husbandman, that after his cost and pains he shall in the end reap some fruit as a recompense of his labours; and shall we not think that God will require the same at our hands, we being the vineyard of the Lord of hosts? For every Christian that liveth in the church is a tree in God's orchard, he hath his room and standing; the Lord watereth them with the dew of heaven, the ministry of his word and gospel, and the use of his sacraments. Now the Lord looks that we should yield him fruit, otherwise you know what became of the figtree that had goodly leaves but no fruit, it was sentenced with this curse, 'Never fruit grow on thee more.' It will not go for payment with Almighty God that we have been baptized into Christ's nature, that we have a being here in the church of God, and are taken for good trees before men; no, it is our bringing forth of much fruit that must assure us that we are the members of Christ, and ingrafted into him.

*Objct.* What be the fruits that a godly man must bring forth?

*Ans.* They be the fruits of good works, they be the fruits of a godly life, in a word, they be the blessed fruits of faith, the fruits of repentance, and the fruits of new obedience.

1. First, Every true and lively member of Jesus Christ,—that is, every godly man or woman that is regenerate and born anew, and so a sound Christian—must labour to bring forth the fruit of faith. Now faith is nothing else but that grace of God in a man's heart whereby he believes the promise of salvation and the promises of the gospel, and applies them to his own soul, and therefore St James saith, 'Shew me thy faith by thy works.' Dost thou delight in the law of God and love his word? Dost thou delight in his worship and calling on his name? Dost thou find thy faith to purify thy heart? Acts xv. 9. This is some part of that fruit which God requireth of thee. This fruit Peter brought forth, 'Thou art Christ the Son of the living God,' Mat. xvi. 16. This was the fruit that the disciples brought forth, 'We believe and know that thou art Christ,

the Son of the living God,' John vi. 69. And indeed this is the first stone that is to be laid in the building up of a Christian, and therefore very fitly called a foundation. And the Colossians are said to be rooted, and built, and stablished in the faith, Col. ii. 7. And indeed this is that sure foundation that shall bear up the whole frame of our souls against all winds and weathers. It is the first work of change in the heart, and the first difference betwixt man and man, when God 'by faith purifieth the heart,' Acts xv. 9. It will suffer no unclean thoughts, unlawful lusts, or wandering motions to harbour there, guideth the affections, love, hatred, sorrow, &c. Such a man loves nothing more than God, hates nothing more than sin, rejoiceth in nothing more than in doing the will of God, and sorrows for nothing more than that he should offend so good and gracious a God. Again, it is the foundation of all our obedience, for 'without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb. xi. 6. And without it we can neither pray, hear, or perform any duty that shall be acceptable with God.

2. The second is the fruit of repentance, whereby a man is humbled for his sins past, and is afraid of sin in time to come. This fruit of repentance is of absolute necessity to salvation, according to that of our Saviour, 'Except ye repent ye shall all perish,' Luke xiii. 5. And only godly sorrow must work this true repentance in a man, 'Godly sorrow causeth repentance in a man to salvation,' 2 Cor. vii. 10. And therefore in the Scriptures are recorded the mournings of the godly in the days of their humiliation: David's fainting, Ps. vi. 6; Hezekiah chattering like a crane, Isa. xxxviii. 14; Job abhorring himself in dust and ashes; Peter weeping bitterly, Mat. xxvi. 75; Mary Magdalene washing Christ's feet with her tears, Luke vii. 38; and Paul crying out, 'O wretched man that I am,' Rom. vii. 24. We must mourn with these here if we must mourn<sup>1</sup> with them hereafter. And surely if there were neither heaven nor hell, neither reward nor punishment, yet the godly would sorrow for sin, for offending their good and gracious God and loving Father. Besides this sorrow in a godly man for his sins past he is exceeding afraid of sin in time to come, as David was, who prayed unto God so

<sup>1</sup> Query, 'rejoice.' Ed.

earnestly that he would 'stablish him with his free Spirit,' Ps. li. 10. That seeing he had such woeful experience of his own weakness, he prays unto the Lord that he would give him his preventing grace, that he might never fall into the like sin again. So the godly Israelites in Ezra his time, Ezra ix. 10, 13, when they had with grief of heart bewailed their sins unto God, they resolve to make a covenant with God, and solemnly to bind themselves to put away their strange wives, whereby they had so much dishonoured him. And so it is with all the faithful, even as a good child, having by his unthankfulness vexed his father, is careful afterwards to please him again by all means possible. Well, then, dost thou find these fruits of true repentance in thee? are thou grieved and even pained at thy heart for thy wicked life, for thy ignorance, unbelief, hardness of heart, thy neglect of prayer and calling on God's name? Art thou grieved for want of reverence in God's worship, for thy abusing God,—namely, by swearing, cursing, and banning, for contempt of his word and sacraments, for profaning of his Sabbaths, careless governing of the family, for thy malice, unbelief, unclean, proud, and covetous thoughts, drunkenness, uncleanness, and the like? Again, dost thou find in thee an earnest desire to walk with God in obedience to all his commandments, to live in no known sin, but in all things to please God to the utmost of thy power? These be the fruits of righteousness, whereby we are known to be of God.

3. The third is the fruit of new obedience, or of a godly life, both in obedience of God's laws in the first and second table. Christ makes this the earmark of his sheep, 'To hear his voice and follow him,' John x. And we are willed by the author of the epistle unto the Hebrews to 'Cast away every thing that presseth down, and the sin that hangeth so fast on, and to run with patience the race that is set before us.' This was godly David's resolution, 'I will run the way of thy commandments,' Ps. cxix. 32, and David, describing the true worshippers of God, saith, 'They go on from strength to strength,' Ps. lxxxiv. 7, serving God in truth of heart, without hypocrisy; and it is said here, that the fruit of a godly man doth never fade. And howsoever the work of mortification is never perfected in this life,

but that the remnants and relics of sin will still remain, even in the godly themselves, yet they ever sin with grief of heart, and Christ's death doth set such a work against all sin, that the regenerate man can truly say, 'It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me.' So then if thou desirest to please God in all his commandments, at all times, and in all places, and to do all duties of love unto men required in the commandments of the second table, shewing thy fruits in doing of good to the poor distressed members of Jesus Christ, feeding, clothing, and comforting them in their need. In thy general calling to bring forth the fruit of godliness, to be much in and often exercised in prayer, hearing, reading, meditating, &c. As also in thy particular calling to do thy duty with a true faith, and a good conscience, without fraud, guile, deceit, &c. These be the fruits that are required in all those that are the members of Jesus Christ, and ingrafted into his mystical body.

*Use 1.* This doctrine doth flatly condemn all such, as unfruitful and barren trees, as bring forth no fruit of a godly, righteous, and religious life, such as live in continual ignorance, blindness, hardness of heart, in contempt of the word, profanation of the Sabbath; our civil honest men which are so much admired; if they be not good Christians, who should? And if they be not saved, I know not who should go to heaven. Well, every good tree brings forth good fruit. Where be your good fruits? No fruits of faith, no fruit of repentance, nor new obedience; but instead thereof the fruits of infidelity and hardness of heart, and disobedience. Alas! that poor souls should thus go blindfold to hell! to think that such should be saved; what then should become of hell! As though a man might be a true member of Jesus Christ, and ingrafted into his mystical body, and yet be barren of good fruits. No, no, it cannot be, for there is such a lively power in this stock of life, Christ Jesus, that they who are once ingrafted into him, bring forth fruit incessantly. As we may see in the thief upon the cross, what fruit he bare in an instant of time; first, confession of his own sins; secondly, reproving the sins of his companion; thirdly, clearing Christ to be innocent; lastly, praying that Christ would remember him when he came into his kingdom; and this we

may see in Zaccheus, Lydia, &c., who were no sooner converted, but brought forth fruit incontinently; and yet we see how many dry, fruitless, and barren trees deceive the world, as the fig-tree Christ. Oh! he is a very honest man, keeps a good house, doth nobody harm, a very kind and civil honest man, &c. Well, is this all? This will not serve to prove him a good Christian. For 'now is the axe put to the root of the tree, every tree that brings not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire,' Mat. iii. 10. We know what became of the fig-tree that had goodly leaves and fair shows, was it not accused? And the tree that the husbandman digged, and pruned, and watered; was it not in the end hewn down and reserved for no other use but fuel for the fire? And this will be the end of many of our civil honest men (so called) whatsoever they think of themselves, or others conceive of them.

Oh, then, how fearful a thing is it to be trees bringing forth leaves and no fruit, as is the condition of all hypocrites; for they shall find at last what it is to be as a barren tree in the Lord's vineyard, for that shall be taken away from them which they seem to have, as proud Jezebel and her painted face shall both of them perish together. On the other side, the elect of God, that bring forth fruit as well as leaves, they shall be both preserved together and grow in grace and knowledge here in this life, and at the last, when these days of sin shall have an end, they themselves shall be gathered into the place of rest, the Sion of the Lord, and their works shall follow them, Rev. xiv. 13. And howsoever works justify not a man, being the best of them weak and imperfect here, yet by our works, as the evidences of our virtues, we shall be judged at the last.

*Use 2.* This then doth plainly shew that their estate is ten times worse and more fearful that brings forth nothing but cursed and bitter fruits of sin and wilful disobedience. A farmer or husbandman will not suffer a tree to grow in his orchard if it either bring no fruit, or else bitter, sour, or unsavoury fruit, so bad as none can eat them, nor there is no use of them, but will hew it down and cast it into the fire. Oh, then, consider this, ye that forget God, ye that live in continual practice of sin and iniquity, yon that bring forth no other fruit but horrible oaths,

blasphemy, drunkenness, whoredom, &c.; that by the axe of God Almighty's vengeance ye shall be hewn down, and to the fire ye must go. If trees as be barren and bring forth no fruit shall be destroyed and cast into the fire, how much more such miserable and sinful wretches whose whole life is nothing else but a heaping of iniquity unto iniquity, and all profaneness against God and man? If the rich man was damned that did not give of his bread to poor Lazarus, good Lord, what shall become of those that take away, and, as it were, grind the face of the poor? In a word, if he, not being fruitful in good works, shall be punished so sharply and severely, what shall then become of those that even abound in all manner of most abominable sin and iniquity? Oh, 'consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.'

*Use 3.* Let this admonish every man to try himself, to look into his own soul. Thou art a tree in God's orchard, the Lord he husbands thee, doth bestow cost on thee to water and dress thee by his word and sacraments, mercies and judgments. Well, he comes to seek fruit of thee, it may be he hath come three, four, seven, or ten years together, and still thou hast no fruit, but remainest still a barren tree. Well, the Lord will not always stay and wait for fruit at thy hands, Luke xiv. 9, but will say to the vinedresser, 'Cut me this fruitless and barren tree down; why doth it cover the ground and keep it barren?' as it is in Isa. v. 'The ground that receiveth the rain that comes often upon it, and brings forth fruit meet for him that dresses it, receives a blessing; but him that brings forth thorns and briars is sentenced with a curse, whose end is to be burned,' Heb. vi. 7, 8. If ye have not yet begun, begin now to bring forth fruit, I mean the fruits of faith, the fruits of repentance, and the fruits of obedience, of a godly life and conversation. If ye have begun already, oh labour then to do it more, bring forth more, and more better fruit to abound in good works; such trees as these are shall be spared, and not destroyed, Dent. xx. 19, but such trees as bring forth no fruit, 'Hew them down, why cumber they the ground?'

*In due season.*

That is, in time convenient, when it may most serve for God's glory and the good of our neigh-

hour. So that here we have a further condition of this tree set out by the circumstance of the time, that it 'bringeth forth fruit in due season.' And we know it is a commendable thing in our grounds, and so in our trees, that they bring us out their fruit in their due season. If our corn should not be ripe till the summer were over, or our trees begin to bud in the spring before summer come, men would look to reap but small store of fruits. Well, as this is commended in our ground and in our trees, so is it no less commendable in our souls, and a true note of a godly man, and a blessed proceeding from his ingrafting into Jesus Christ, that he likewise bring forth fruit in due season.

*Doct. 6.* In this observe the godly care, and the heavenly wisdom of a godly man, and one that is a child of God; that he waits and watches his time, and then readily takes the occasion to do good. Everything hath his time and season, 'Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near,' Isa. lv. 6, 7. Out of which words we gather, that as there is a time when the Lord will be found of them that seek him (which time is a godly man's season, for now doth he seek the Lord) so there is a time when the Lord will not be found, and that a blessing cannot be obtained at his hands, though a man seek it with tears, as Esau did, for so saith the Lord, 'Because I have cried and called unto you, and ye would not hear; therefore the time shall come, that ye shall cry and call unto me, and I will not answer,' Prov. i. 24, 28. Again, 'Exhort ye one another daily, while it is called to-day,' Heb. iii. 13. For our hearing, for our reading, praying, singing, and meditating, &c., there are times for each of these, which the godly man doth in no wise omit. And of this there is great reason; for shall we not be as careful of the performance of our duties herein, as we are in our own affairs? In our ploughing and sowing, our reaping and gathering in, our putting off of our cattle, and tilling our ground. Men know their times, and take their opportunities, even then when it shall stand with their best advantage. Oh that we could be as wise for our souls, to purchase the true treasure which will make us rich unto salvation, as we are for these temporal things which do last but for a time. Surely it is the care of a godly

man. As the mariner watches for the wind, and when it comes, hauls up sail; as the captain and soldier in the field wait their time; yea, and as the birds, swan and crane, the beasts, swallow, and pismire, wait their times, and then take the occasion and season offered; so the child of God doth in his heavenly wisdom wait the time, and take the occasion to do good. As Joseph in the seven years of plenty, provided for the seven years of dearth; so the godly man bringeth forth fruit in due season,—that is, in time convenient. As when the Lord calls man to repent, he repents; when occasion is to pray, he will pray; when the season is to hear, he will hear; when to reprove, he will reprove; when to give to the poor, he hath his hand ready; so as when occasion is offered he takes it. Yea, he waits and watches for it, as Lot did to entertain strangers at his tent-door, Gen. xvii., and as that poor man in the Gospel, who lay at the pool of Bethesda, waiting for the moving of the water, John v.

*Use 1.* This reproves the folly and carelessness of most men, who neither wait the time, nor yet take the occasion offered. The Lord calls men to prayer, to call on his name, they make light of it. The Lord calls men to hear his word, men contemn it. The Lord offers occasion to reprove sin, they will not open their mouths to reprove the swearer, blasphemers, cursed speaker, &c. The Lord offers occasion to relieve the poor, they shut up the bowels of mercy against them. In the matters of the world, oh, men are wise to take their time, the merchant, the mariner, the husbandman, &c. But in the matters of God, which concern the salvation of our souls, we are like that sick man that let every man step in before him. Well, if we belong unto God, it will grieve us at the heart that we have not done our duty, that we have omitted our occasions of doing of good; whether to hear, read, pray, reprove, or to give unto the poor. Well, let us now 'seek the Lord while he may be found.' Let us not with the slothful servant, defer till our master's coming. How many be there that say, that they will now live at ease, in joy, and will take their pleasure, and follow their sports, and when they be old, then they will repent and serve God, and give themselves to prayer; but let none think if they do

spend the flower of their youth in lusts and pleasures, in the service of sin and Satan, that God will accept of their rotten old age, no, the devil shall have the dregs as well as the wine.

*Use 2.* Hence we observe, in the second place, that God's children are never void of the fruits of faith, but have them in them continually to their endless comfort. Other trees oftentimes fall to degenerate, and to grow out of kind, and if they do hold out a long time, yet age at the last makes them to decay and to die; albeit you dig and dung, and water them never so much, it cannot keep them from wasting and withering; but it is not so with godly men, which are planted by the 'rivers of water' in God's church; for even in their old age, they bring forth abundance and store of fruit, albeit they be never so old, yet whensoever the season requires some fruit of a godly man, he is ever ready to perform the same, being that he is continually watered by the working of his Spirit. And this is confirmed by that of our Saviour Christ, 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman, every branch that beareth no fruit in me, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.' John xv. 1, 2. So that being once planted by these rivers of waters, we shall then incontinently bring forth fruit.

*His leaf shall not fade.*

This is the third point of the description of this tree, to the which a godly man is compared; namely, by the flourishing estate of it, that her leaves do not fall. They wither not, nor dry not, but always flourish and are green. Of this sort is the olive-tree, the bay-tree, the laurel-tree, and the box-tree; they are always green and flourishing, the heat of the summer, nor the cold of the winter, doth not parch or wither them, but they keep their vigour and colour at all seasons. Now this doth signify unto us the constancy and the perseverance of the godly. For as the tree planted thus by the fresh springing waters doth always flourish and is ever green, neither is it nipped either with the heat of summer, or cold of winter; so the godly man that is truly regenerate, he is constant, and doth persevere even unto the end.

*Doct. 7.* Hence we learn that it is not enough for a man or woman to begin well, or to take some liking of religion, to have some good motions, as to

reverence good ministers, to desire to hear them, to join with the people of God in prayer, to bring forth some good fruit in outward reformation of life, &c., unless he persevere, persist, and go on unto the end. 'He that endures to the end shall be saved,' Mat. xxiv. 12. And, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,' Rev. ii. 10. 'If a righteous man leave his righteousness,' &c., Ezra xiii. 24. 'He that puts his hand to the Lord's plough, and looketh back, is not worthy of the kingdom of heaven,' Luke ix. 62. Again, 'It had been better for them that they had never known the ways of godliness than afterwards to fall away,' 2 Pet. ii. 21. And therefore in the Scriptures, such as have had some beginning and after fallen away are noted to have been exceeding wicked men. As we see in Judas, first a preacher and an apostle, a man well esteemed, that had excellent gifts to preach, pray, and cast out devils, afterwards an hypocrite, a thief, a traitor, a reprobate. Herod had many things in him at first, revered John Baptist, heard him gladly, did many things at his request, yet afterward a bloody persecutor. Demas, once a sound professor as it seemed, and one that was dear unto Paul, but afterwards left his profession and fell in love with the world, like the church of Ephesus lost their first love and grew worse and worse, Rev. ii. 4. So that, let all men know that though they have many excellent gifts and graces of God's Spirit, knowledge, faith, repentance, zeal, patience, yet all is nothing worth unless they hold out in faith, repentance, and obedience, and maintain faith and a good conscience even unto the end. If a soldier should be cunning and skilful, knowing how to fight and handle his weapon well, and yet should turn his back and play the coward, he is but a cowardly soldier, and not worthy of the crown. And therefore it is a special duty, required of every Christian, to continue steadfast; 'Be thou faithful unto the end, and I will give thee a crown of life,' Rev. ii. 10.

*Use 1.* Hence we see that it is a dangerous thing to revolt and go backwards in matters of religion, to lose our first love. It is a fearful sign of a reprobate and castaway, when men slack hand and slip neck out of collar, grow careless in the service and worship of God; for a man to grow, there is some hope, though he do but creep on in religion;

but for a man to go backward or to stand at a stay is dangerous. For it is certain, not to go forward in God's matters is to go backward; not to increase is to decrease; not to grow better is to wax worse. It is a hard matter to make a good beginning, we are not easily brought to set foot forward in the ways of godliness; but then to trip while we are in our journey, and to wax weary of well-doing, this is a fearful sin. Well, then, lay this doctrine to heart, examine yourselves, see how ye grow, whether as good trees in God's orchard, being so watered with the rivers of water of the sanctuary, and fed in the green pastures. If a child go to school, and do not increase in knowledge, learning, and education, all money and pains is ill bestowed. If a tree be planted, and do grow worse and worse, it is time to cut it down. Well, we be trees in God's orchard, the Lord hath planted us by the rivers of waters, when a great number about us be in a barren soil and have no means. And for us not to grow, but rather to decay, it were the next way to provoke God to bring his axe and to hew us down. And therefore prove how you hold your own, how you grow in knowledge, faith, repentance, and obedience. And, above all things, take heed that you decay not in grace, go not backward, lose not your first love. I fear me it may be said of us, as Christ said sometime to the church of Sardis, 'Thou hast a name that thou livest, take heed thou be not dead,' Rev. iii. 1. Repent therefore and amend, that the things in thee ready to die may be recovered.

Use 2. Here is a notable means to try hypocrites from good Christians: he that is sound-hearted, and truly humbled and regenerate, will persevere and grow in grace, hold out to the end, so as their works shall be more at last than at the first; yea, the godly man is like the tall cedar, the more it is shaken with storms and tempests it takes the deeper root and grows the faster; like the camomile, the more it is trodden on the more it grows; or like some precious stones, never shine better than in the darkest night; or like perfume, never so sweet as when it is rubbed and chafed; or gold, never brighter than when it is fined in the fire. The word of God is plain for this: Abraham in all his journeys and travels, though he met with many and dangerous enemies, yet he was most constant in his faith; David, in all

his troubles, yet still was religious; the children in the fire, most glorious conquerors; Daniel in the den, a blessed man; Job, in his greatest extremity, a patient man; Paul, Peter, and the rest of the apostles, never shewed themselves more worthy men than in great trials and storms of persecutions. So that you see a godly man is well compared to a strong oak or cedar, or rather a palm-tree, that never loseth his leaves, fruit, and greenness—no, not in the bitter storms and blasts of winter. So the godly man doth not shrink in the wetting like to a piece of sail-cloth, but doth persevere, and is constant even unto the end, his works are more at last than at first.

But come to a hypocrite, a counterfeit Christian, a false professor of the gospel, you shall see they be like painted sepulchres, fair without but foul within; like to empty vessels which make great noise and have no liquor in them; like a piece of sail-cloth which, being drawn out and set on the tenters, will quickly shrink in the wetting. They be like to false friends, that will hang on like burs while there is some gain to be gotten, but they will fail a man when he hath most need of them. So long as it is fair weather, and there is no danger in professing of the gospel, they will seem forward and very zealous, as though they were the only men in the world; but if there come any matter of danger, if the sun grow hot, or if storms or tempests do arise—that is, troubles and persecutions for religion's sake and the gospel's sake, they will then hide their heads and profess no longer. All the goodly leaves and shows they made will wither and come to nothing, then they will appear to their kind. Such our Saviour Christ likeneth unto corn in the stony ground, which makes a fair show for a time, but when the sun arises it withers away. Even so, these kind of professors, if any trial or trouble do come for the gospel's sake, or that for their profession they should lose the favour of some great man, oh, then, they think it the safest way to sleep in a whole skin; then they wither away, and then they shew they did profess the gospel, not in truth and sincerity for love to the gospel, but for some other respect, namely, for some hope of gain, or honour, or favour of men, or for praise of the world.

Use 3. Let this admonish us all, as we do love our

own souls, to labour for constancy and perseverance, that we may hold out unto the end, that our works may be more at last than at first, that we cast our account beforehand what it will cost us to be religious indeed, that we be sure to dig so deep, that we lay the foundation of our faith upon the rock Christ; and for want of this godly care and circumspection aforehand, many have at the first given their names to Christ, who afterwards, when they were to take up the cross of Christ, have gone out and turned their backs upon Christ. Saul began well, but afterwards he waxed worse, and in the end became an open persecutor. Joash behaved himself uprightly all the days of Jehoiada, and repaired the house of the Lord, but after his death he fell to idolatry. What did it profit Lot's wife to go out of Sodom, inasmuch as afterwards she looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt? So, then, we see here that it is not enough to purpose well, it is not enough to begin well, neither is it enough to proceed well; it is required of us to persevere well, and to continue in a constant and settled course even unto the end.

*Doct. 8.* Last of all, that it is said here that the leaves—that is to say, the faith of a Christian—shall never fall. Hence I gather that no elect child of God that is truly regenerate and born anew, and a lively member of Christ's mystical body, can perish and finally fall away. 'For whom God predestineth, him he calleth, whom he calleth he justifieth, whom he justifieth he glorifieth,' Rom. viii. 30. 'The gift and calling of God is without repentance.' 'My sheep hear my voice and follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man take them out of my hand,' John x. 27-29. And the reason is, 'We bear not the root, but the root beareth us.' Our salvation doth not depend upon ourselves, for then, indeed, we were in danger to fall away every moment of an hour, but it dependeth upon him, because we are in him, and through him we grow and increase; yea, the older we be in Christ the more do we fasten our root and flourish. They which are planted in the courts of the Lord shall flourish in their old age, and bring forth much fruit.

And whereas other branches are many times pulled from their stock, either by the violence of

the wind, by the hands of men, or at the least consumed by length of time, it shall not be so with them that are in Christ; for they are kept by him, as the root bearing branches. Because I am not altered nor changed, therefore are you not consumed, O ye sons of Jacob! And therefore right happy is the state of that man who is in Christ Jesus; for 'neither life, nor death, things present, nor things to come, shall separate him from the love of God,' Rom. viii. 38.

And this comfort is confirmed to us by most sure arguments. The first is taken from the nature of Almighty God: 'He is faithful which hath promised.' And 'I am persuaded,' saith the apostle, 'that he who hath begun this good work will perform it until the day of Christ.'

The second is taken from the nature of that life which Christ communiceth to his members: 'We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more,' Rom. vi. 9. This life of Christ is communicated to us, so that it is not we that live now, but Christ that liveth in us.

The third is taken from the nature of that seed whereof we are begotten: we are 'born anew, not of mortal seed, but immortal,' 1 Pet. i. 23. Now as the seed is, so is the life that comes by that seed; our life therefore must needs be immortal.

*U<sup>se</sup> 1.* This confuteth the detestable doctrine of the Papists, who hold and teach that a man elected, called, justified, and sanctified, may for ever fall away and be damned; that he which to-day is the dear child of God, to-morrow may become the child of the devil; to-day a member of Christ, to-morrow a limb of the devil; to-day an heir of salvation, to-morrow a child of damnation. Now what doctrine can be more devilish and uncomfortable? This is nothing else but to set up a gibbet to torment the poor souls of God's children, to overthrow the nature of faith, to make God feeble and weak, or foolish and unwise, which is manifest blasphemy; but we see here the word of God tells us this cannot be: 'For what shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus?' Nothing.

*U<sup>se</sup> 2.* This may serve to reprove another sort of men, who are ready to abuse this doctrine. Tu-h, saith the carnal and loose Christian, it skills not then how a man lives, whether well or ill, he that is

ected and is a member of Christ shall be saved, and he that is rejected shall be damned, though he live never so well; therefore they take liberty to sin, and make conscience of no sin whatsoever. But they must know that God decrees a man as well to the means as to the end. And it is impossible a man should be elected and called, but he must live well; so he that is not elected and called cannot live well. And it is all one as if a man should never eat or drink, and yet hope to live and like well; or lying in the fire or water, and using no means to come out, should not perish. But we must know that the end and the means must go together. And for a man to neglect or reject the means, it is in vain for him to hope to be saved; for if thou belong to God thou shalt in time be called and sanctified; and where his work is not as already wrought, that man is as yet in the state of damnation.

*Use 3.* Here is matter of endless comfort to every true child of God that truly repents and believes in Jesus Christ, that howsoever, through the malice of Satan, and the temptation of the devil, the allurements of the world, and the corruption of our flesh, we may grievously sin and fall; yet there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, Rom. viii. 1. 'The gates'—that is, all the powers—of hell shall not prevail against us,' Mat. xvi. If ever thou foundest the sound work of grace in thee, foundest Jesus Christ to dwell in thy heart by faith, so that thou hatest all sin, and desirest in all things to please God, though Satan rage and storm, and all the gates of hell rise up against thee; yet thou mayest comfort thyself in the Lord, and say with Paul, 'There is no condemnation to me that am in Christ, which walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Thou mayest triumph with Paul, and say, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's chosen?' and, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' and again, 'I am persuaded nothing can sever me from the love of God in Christ Jesus;' no, not sin, nor death itself. Oh, happy then and blessed is the estate of that man who is in Christ! 'Neither life, nor death, things present, nor things to come, shall separate him from the love of God.'

*And whatsoever he doth shall prosper.*

*Doch. 9.* Here is described another part of the blessedness of a godly man, containing the mercy and goodness of God unto him in the lawful things wherein he hath to deal, that God doth of his infinite mercy and love direct and prosper this man, giving a blessing and good success to all he takes in hand. And this mercy all men desire, to attain prosperity and good success in their estates; all men desire it,—lo, here it is promised.

Hence we learn that it is not in vain for a man to be godly, to be religious, to walk with God, and to keep faith and a good conscience before God and man, but it is the only way to be blessed, to have the blessing of God upon us in our places and callings, and to have good success in all things that we take in hand. This is taught by Moses unto the people of Israel, 'If thou wilt obey diligently the voice of the Lord thy God, and observe and do all his commandments which I command thee this day, &c., all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt obey the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed in the field; blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, &c., and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto,' Deut. xxviii., the whole chapter. This did the Lord unto Joshua, 'Let not the book of the law depart out, &c., for thou shalt then make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success,' Josh. i. 7, 8. And the apostle saith, That 'godliness hath the promise of this life and the life to come,' 1 Tim. iv. 8. If you would see the promise performed, look into the history of the godly kings: David, Ps. cxxxviii.; Josiah, Jer. xxii.; Hezekiah, &c., 1 Chron. xxviii. 8, 9; who so long as they walked with God and kept his commandments, and were truly godly and religious, how did they prosper and grow in the world? how did God bless them in all that they put their hands unto? This we may clearly behold in Joseph, who was a godly and a virtuous man, and how did the Lord prosper Joseph? 'His master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand,' Gen. xxxix. 1, 2. It is said of Job, that he was 'a just and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil,' Job i. 1. And it is rehearsed how God did bless him in all his sub-



stance, which was very great, so as the devil confessed that Job did not serve God for nought, but that God did therefore bless him, Job i. 9. And the reason is because the godly man takes nothing in hand without the warrant of God's word, Ps. cxix. 9. Secondly, He doth that is good in a good manner, in faith and hearty obedience; and lastly, The end of all his actions is the glory of God and the good of his neighbour, 'And whatsoever he shall do shall prosper.'

*Object.* But it will be objected against this doctrine that this seems not to be so, for do we not see that wicked men, ungodly wretches, monstrous sinners, that they flourish in the world, that they live in great prosperity, delight, and pleasures? This made David and Jeremiah to expostulate the matter with God, 'Why do the wicked flourish in the world, and why do such prosper?' And again, 'Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? why are they in wealth that rebelliously transgress?' It grieved both David and Jeremiah, and made them to fret inwardly, as though God seemed to favour wicked men, and to dislike and discountenance the righteous and the godly.

*Answer.* For answer, You are to know that there is a double kind of prosperity, the one we may call *spiritual*, proceeding from God's favour and love unto us in Christ, and declared principally in the bestowing on us the spiritual and heavenly graces of his Spirit: as faith, repentance, sanctification, &c., unto the which the Lord also addeth the blessings and benefits of this life, so far forth as the Lord shall judge them meet and expedient for his children here.

There is another kind of prosperity, which is *earthly*, a thriving only in earthly things, as wealth, honour, credit, &c., all which may befall, and do befall, the wicked men and ungodly. But David speaketh here of the former, promiseth that this shall be one part of his happiness, that he shall have good success,—that is, a plentiful measure of all spiritual graces, that shall make him rich unto salvation, and in earthly matters also according to his portion, so that howsoever a wicked man may esteem riches, honour, prosperity, and the like, to be the best, yet the godly man saith, with David, 'Lord, shew me thy countenance;' his prosperity

being double, inward and outward, the chiefest of all is heavenly.

As for the things of this life the godly doth prosper, and the Lord doth give good success.

First, Whether the godly man have little or much, he hath it from God's right hand, as a blessing and a favour of God, given unto him as a right in Jesus Christ: whereas a wicked man, though he have never so much, he hath it from God's left hand,—that is, with anger and displeasure, with the secret curse of God.

Secondly, The godly man, hath he little or much, he hath it with the peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost. David, having his portion from the Lord as a blessing, saith, That the Lord made him more joyful thereby than they whose 'corn, and oil, and wine abounded,' Ps. iv. 7. 'A small thing that the righteous hath is better than great riches of the ungodly,' Ps. xxxvii. 16.

Thirdly, The godly man's estate is permanent and durable, his prosperity doth not ebb and flow, but continueth and lasteth; but the prosperity of the wicked is too uncertain; yea, when they be at the highest, suddenly the Lord sets them in a slippery place, and down they fall. (Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, &c.) and their fall is the more fearful, because it is not only sudden but in the height of their prosperity, sometimes by God's vengeance upon them, sometimes by one means, sometimes by another.

*Use 1.* This may serve to stop the mouths of the common atheists of the world, who say that it is in vain to serve God, and lost labour to be religious, no fruit in leading of a godly life, Mal. iii. 14. For so they say, if they would follow sermons, and spend their time in prayer, and calling on God, in reading and meditating of his word, they should beg when they have done, and such men never prosper in the world. But that is a false accusation. Did not Abraham prosper, and Lot, Joseph, Job, David, Hezekiah, and the like, even because they were godly, therefore they prospered; yea, only the godly man may be truly said to prosper, because he alone is in the favour of God, he alone hath his prosperity from the right hand of God, he alone hath them as blessings, and in the favour and love of God; whereas the wicked and ungodly man

bath riches from the left hand of God's anger and displeasure to him, they have them with no comfort, nor peace, but with great vexation, trouble, and disquietness, and they spend them with great pain and sorrow.

*Use 2.* This may reprove the foolish brag and boast of wicked men, who therefore think that they be highly in God's favour, because he lets them attain to great preferment, honour, and dignity here, and that therefore God doth favour and love them. Poor soul, hast thou no better reason to prove thyself in God's favour? Ham was a rich man, so was Esau a great man in the world, Pharaoh, Herod, Nebuchadnezzar, and many others, and yet never the more beloved of God, but wicked and damnable, as the glutton, Luke xvi. Nay, know, unless thou be a godly man, thy riches will be thy bane, and they be tokens of God's vengeance, to make thee more proud, cruel, and wicked, unclean and filthy; yea, to feed thy soul to the day of slaughter.

*Use 3.* This should admonish all godly men to take heed how they fret and grieve at the vain and uncertain prosperity of the wicked and ungodly; it is that which troubles the godly much, as it did Job, Jeremiah, David, and Asaph, who wondered and were much grieved at this, to see the ungodly flourish, and to abound in honour, dignity, wealth, authority, the only men of the world; and, on the contrary part, the godly in misery, trouble, &c. But when they went into the house of the Lord, then understood they the end of those men; namely, that God did set them in slippery places, and that their end was fearful, Ps. lxxiii. 17. Ps. xxxvii. 17. And as Job saith, 'They spend their days in pleasure, and suddenly go down to hell,' Job xxi. 13. Let us then consider well of these things, and not to grieve at the wicked because they prosper, or to be drawn hereby to think the better of them, or their vile courses, because they flourish a while; or the worse of the godly, because they endure some trouble; but consider their latter end, and in the meantime to possess our souls with patience, notwithstanding the jollity of the wicked, for it is but for a time, like a great thistle, which starts up in the summer, and at the coming of winter is gone; or the poor

estate of the godly, for in the end they shall be exalted.

*Use 4.* Last of all, If we desire to thrive in the world, to prosper, and to have the blessing of God upon our labours, the best, yea, and the surest way is to become religious, to walk with God, to lead a godly life, 1 Tim. iv. 8. The example of Abraham, Joseph, Joshua, David, Job, &c., may persuade us hereunto. We see many take great pains night and day, toil and moil all the year long, even wearing out their bodies early and late, and yet do not thrive, do not prosper and come forward, but rather go down the wind. The reason is, God doth not bless them and their labours, because they be wicked, and live in the practice of some known sin. And, therefore, if thou wouldest find God's blessing upon thee and thine, upon thy soul, body, goods, good name, wife, child, corn, cattle, &c., the best way is to serve God, to call on his name, to lead a godly life, and then certainly thou shalt find that God will bless thee, and make thee to prosper.

Ver. 4. *The wicked are not so, but as the chaff which the wind driveth away.*

Now we have heard the description of a godly man, and of his blessed and happy estate wherein he stands. Also he proceedeth to a plain description of a wicked and ungodly man. And he sets out his estate by a general speech opposite unto that which had been spoken of the godly: 'The wicked are not so.' Then by a similitude, comparing him unto *chaff*, and then the property of chaff is noted to be light, vain, and inconstant, *carried away with the wind*.

In the general description or the introduction in the description of a wicked man, *The wicked are not so*, the speech is negative, and excludeth the wicked from all that which the Spirit of God hath spoken of the godly, both concerning their virtues themselves, as also concerning the recompense of their virtues.

The virtues of a godly man were described two ways; first, negatively, 'They walk not in the counsel of the wicked, stand not in the way of sinners, sit not in the seat of the scornful.' Now this negative in the godly is affirmative in the wicked, because they walk in the counsel of the wicked, they stand

in the way of sinners, and they sit in the seat of the scorners.

The other description of a godly man is affirmative: 'But his delight is in the law of the Lord,' &c., ver. 2. But this affirmative in the godly is negative in the wicked, for their delight is in nothing less than in the law of the Lord, neither do or will the wicked meditate therein, either day or night. So that, in respect of the virtues of a godly man, it may well be said, 'The wicked are not so.'

And, last of all, for the recompense of the virtues of a godly man, the wicked are also excluded. The godly man is compared unto 'a tree that is planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth fruit in due season, whose leaf doth never fade, and whatsoever he doth shall prosper.' *The wicked are not so, 'but as the chaff,' &c.*

Where, by the way, we may observe the care that God hath, that every man should have his part that pertaineth to him. He would not that the wicked should encroach upon the portion of the godly, or that the saints should be dismayed by the judgments of the wicked; but he labourereth, as to allot and allow to one their part, so to exclude the other from their portion, to shew that they have no interest in their blessedness. And so it is a usual thing in the course of the whole Scriptures, that where the Holy Ghost setteth down the blessings and promises pertaining to Christians, in the same place he setteth down the judgments that belong to the wicked and ungodly.

*Doct. 1.* Out of the general description, or introduction into the description of a wicked man, in these words, *The wicked are not so*, we gather this doctrine, that the estate of all wicked men, be they what they may be, never so great, glorious, rich, wise, beautiful, and learned in the world, yet their estate is woeful, cursed, miserable, and wretched; he is cursed in his soul, cursed in his body, cursed in his goods, good name, wife, children, corn, cattle, &c. 'Thou hast destroyed the proud, and cursed are they that do err from thy commandments. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight, for thou hatest all them that work iniquity.' Now, what though a man should abound in wealth, live in honour, bathe himself in pleasures, yet if he be not a godly man—

that is, truly sanctified—he can take no sound comfort in any of these. 'For to them that are defiled is nothing pure,' but even their prayers are abominable. 'He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayers shall be abominable,' Prov. xxviii. 9. And as Solomon saith, 'The hope of the wicked will perish.' But it will be asked, Wherein stands their misery and cursed estate? I answer, first in this, that they be out of God's favour, God hates them and all they do. And is not this a misery of all miseries, to be cursed and miserable indeed, to have God our enemy, to have Jesus Christ the Judge our enemy, to have all the creatures in heaven and earth against us? For as these be truly blessed that God loves and be in his favour, so they be most cursed and miserable that be out of his favour, whom his soul abhorreth; and such are the wicked, according to that of the prophet, 'The foolish shall not stand in thy sight, for thou hatest all them that work iniquity,' Ps. v. 5.

Secondly, They have no pardon of their sins, and so lie under the curse of God, and in danger of eternal death every day they rise. Without repentance there is no pardon; but the wicked cannot repent, being hardened in sin, and delight in sin; yea, all their sins stand in account against them—the Lord keeps them in remembrance, and one day he will bring out his book of reckoning: 'I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things thou hast done,' Ps. l. 21. Oh, full little do wicked men think of this, that their secret sins in higger-mugger, in dark corners committed, shall one day come to reckoning, and they called to a reckoning for the same; and then their own consciences, will they, nill they, shall cry out and say, 'Righteous is the Lord, and true are his judgments.'

Thirdly, They have no peace of conscience. 'There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God,' Isa. lvii. 21, but a hell in their consciences; having in them either an accusing conscience, like Cain, Ahithophel, Saul, Judas, and the like; or else a dead and sleepy conscience, like Nabal, which judgment is no way inferior to the former. This fearful judgment of God upon the wicked is nothing else but a fore-runner of those pains which are prepared for the wicked, and are, as it were, the smoke of that fire which hereafter shall torment them.

Fourthly, A wicked man is the heir of vengeance, and the firebrand of hell, and shall as sure be damned as if he were in hell already; and therefore Christ saith, that the wicked is damned already, John iii. 18; and that five ways. First, In God's counsel before all worlds. Secondly, In the word, wherein their sentence of condemnation is read already. Thirdly, In their own consciences, which is a forerunner of the final judgment. Fourthly, By the judgment begun already upon them, as hardness of heart, blindness of mind, hatred of the light, and the like means of salvation. Fifthly, By the horrible torment of the soul, which it doth assuredly expect when the full vial of God's wrath shall be poured upon it. Oh miserable and unhappy condition! wee worth the time, may such say, that ever they were born.

Who is a wicked man? Answer, (in general.) He that lives and lies in sin without repentance. But such a man is a wicked man as doth walk in the counsel of the wicked, that doth stand in the way of sinners, that doth sit in the seat of the scorners; for as he is a godly man that is careful to shun and avoid the bad counsel and lewd company of wicked and ungodly men, so is he a wicked man that loves and likes their bad counsel and lewd company. And as a nobleman's servant is known by his livery, so we may certainly judge of them by their company. A good man loves good company, a godly man makes much of them that fear the Lord. 'My eyes,' saith David, 'shall be upon the faithful in the land.' This we may see in Jacob, who loved Joseph above all the brethren, because he had grace in him, Gen. xxxvii. 2. 'All my delight is upon thy saints.' But wicked men are like birds of a feather which fly together, and like will to like. So that if you would ask a certain rule how to judge of men, whether they be good or bad, godly or wicked, I know not any rule more sure for a man's outward life, to judge of him, than by his company. And therefore, as St John makes it a mark of God's child, and a certain sign of the love of God to us, 'If we love the brethren,' 1 John iii. 14; so, on the other side, it is a fearful note of a wicked man, when he hath no delight in the company of God's children and faithful servants, but delight only in the company of the wicked and ungodly.

*Use 1.* Let all wicked men lay this doctrine to heart, and be affected with it, and let me say to them, as David saith to the ungodly, Ps. l. 16, 'Unto the ungodly said God, What hast thou to do to take my covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hast to be reformed, and hast cast my word behind thee? When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst unto him, and hast been partaker with the adulterer, &c. These things hast thou done, and I held my peace, and thou thoughtest that I was like thee. But I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things thou hast done. Oh, consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.' Oh that the wicked and ungodly of the world would consider in what cursed state they stand in, what extreme danger to lose their own souls, clean out of God's favour, so as he hates and abhors them, and all they do! Now, as Solomon saith, if the wrath of the king be as the roaring of a lion, how much more the wrath of the eternal God, who is able not only to kill the body, but to cast both soul and body for ever into hell fire! Oh, then, be admonished! say you had a fair warning, repent in time, live no longer in sin, turn to God with all speed, while it is called to-day. Say with David, 'Away from me, ye wicked; I will keep the commandments of my God.' And this remember, that as bad company and the society of wicked men is a fearful sign of a wicked man, so it is most dangerous; for sin is a spiritual plague or leprosy, it is of a spreading and contagious nature. 'Can a man touch pitch and not be defiled?' then may a man keep company with the wicked, and not be corrupted. Joseph living in the court of Pharaoh, how soon had he learned to swear by the life of Pharaoh! Gen. xlii. 15, 16. Besides, we shall be compelled to wink at the sins of those whom we love, and so consenting to them, are guilty of them. Again, we cannot but be vexed with them, and grieved at the heart, as Lot was; yea, and in danger to be plunged with them, as Lot in Sodom was taken prisoner, and all his household. And therefore as men do shun a house infected, so let us shun such company, as most dangerous, pernicious, and hurtful.

*Use 2.* And here we are to wonder at the palpable blindness of wicked men, at their blockishness and senseless security, that though their estate be as we

have heard out of the word of God and testimonies of Holy Scriptures, so cursed, miserable, wretched, and damnable, yet they see it not, they fear it not, they believe it not, they fear no danger, they desire no remedy, their minds and hearts are so blinded through self-love, and so hardened in all kind of sin and iniquity, that nothing can move them and do them good. They be like the smith's dog, no strokes nor sparks can awake them. Of all diseases they be most dangerous that be least felt; as the apoplexy, dead palsy, lethargy, &c. So when a man is sick, even soul-sick, and sick unto death, and feebleth no pain, his case must needs be dangerous. Many men complain of the stone in the kidney, and ride and run night and day to find ease for it; but few complain of the stone in the heart: men have hard, stony, and flinty hearts, and neither love of heaven, nor fear of hell, neither mercy nor judgment can move them or make them to repent. Well, to conclude this point, let men take their courses, run on in sin, walk in the counsel of the wicked, stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of the scornful: let them refuse the counsel and the company of God's servants, and when they have done all that they can, they are but cursed caittifs; and the time will come that they will curse the day that ever they were born, and say, Woe worth the time they kept bad company; oh what fools and madmen were we!—when they shall wish the heavens to fall upon them, and the rocks to crush them in pieces, for fear of the anger of God. And thus much for the general description of a wicked man in these words, 'The wicked are not so.'

*But as the chaff which the wind driveth away.*

The prophet David having shewed the difference betwixt the godly and the wicked by a general introduction, *It is not so*, cometh now to set out their estate by a similitude and comparison, where he compares the wicked to chaff. And it is all one as if he should say, The wicked and ungodly man is not like a tree well planted and watered, that bears good fruit and always flourisheth, but like unto chaff, which hath no root at all in the earth, no juice nor sap, but wants all kind of good fruit and greenness, so as it is easily scattered and dispersed with every blast of wind. Even so the wicked are not rooted nor grafted into Jesus Christ, and are

altogether void and destitute of all fruit of good works and of all saving grace, have no juice nor sap of goodness in them, and in time of trouble and temptation they fall away, yea, every blast of false doctrine, every storm of temptation, trial, or persecution, yea, the least blast of God's anger driveth them hither and thither, they know not which way to turn them.

So that in the similitude or comparison there are two things to be considered of us:—

First, The matter wherunto the wicked are compared unto, *chaff*.

Secondly, The condition of chaff, *which the wind driveth away*.

In the former of these we are to consider how the wicked resemble chaff, naturally, and accidentally.

Natural chaff is light and unprofitable.

1. First, It is light, containing in it no solid and weighty matter, but a very slight and frothy substance, subject to many alterations; even so the wicked are not solid in their purposes and enterprises, and weighty in their carriage and courses, but as chaff, light, easily tossed and blown away.

It may appear unto us that the wicked are as chaff, light; because they be light of their words. They have not their mouth in their heart, like a wise man; but they have their heart in their mouth, like a fool. Do they promise anything? Their words are as wind, as the proverb is. Do they vow anything? They keep their vows like those that vowed Paul's death. Do they swear anything? They are but as bells and bubbles in the water, broken in a moment of time. So that the wicked, in respect of their words, vows, or oaths, may well be compared to chaff, light.

Again, the wicked may well be compared to chaff, light; because they are light of their minds, entertaining and excluding, one while admitting, another while rejecting, infinite purposes and thoughts of heart. Again, they are light of their bodies, by committing many fornications. Yea, let their virtues be compared with their vices, it will then appear that they are 'lighter than vanity' itself.

2. Secondly, as the wicked are like chaff, light, so are they unprofitable, and that two ways—First, In matters temporal concerning this life, wherein, though they have ability, as they have for the most

part, yet they want will to do good with the same. Secondly, In matters spiritual, wherein, though they have a will, which is a rare thing to be found in the wicked, yet they want ability.

First, The wicked are as chaff, unprofitable, in regard of matters temporal. For who doth regard the afflictions of Joseph? For either their will is wholly bent upon covetousness or prodigality. This is an evil which the preacher saw under the sun, 'A man to whom God hath given riches, and treasures, and honours, and he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, but God giveth him no power to eat thereof, but a strange man shall eat it up.' Yea, such is the case of many a man, that where he locks up his riches from others with one lock, he locks them up from himself with a thousand. Or else they spend them prodigally, like the rich glutton, who fared of the best, and went of the finest, but had nothing to bestow on poor Lazarus, Luke xvi. Whereas indeed they are but stewards of those things they enjoy, and must one day give an account for them. And if they be found in the day of their account to have been unprofitable, as chaff is unprofitable, then must they assuredly expect no other sentence than that which was denounced against that unprofitable servant—'Cast that unprofitable servant into outer darkness,' Mat. xxv. 30.

Secondly, The wicked may be said to be as chaff, unprofitable, in respect of matters spiritual, because though they have therein a will, yet want they ability, whereby they might benefit others. For, 'whosoever is born of the flesh is flesh,' and nothing but flesh, John iii. 6. How then can a man give that to another he hath not himself, or speak that to others he is ignorant of himself? Yea, if this man's father or mother, wife or child, lay a-dying, and one short prayer might save their souls, a wicked man is not able to perform that Christian duty for them. For 'he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abominable,' Prov. xxviii. 9. So that, howsoever a wicked man may seem to pray, or the like, yet by reason he is unregenerate, not born anew, and that they proceed not from faith, and a heart purified from sin, the Lord doth turn the same unto sin unto him.

So that a wicked man at his best, in matters

temporal or eternal, he is as chaff, light and unprofitable.

*Doct. 2.* In that the Spirit of God compares all wicked men to chaff, we learn that the estate and condition of wicked men is exceeding inconstant, void, uncertain, mutable, and changeable. They have no certain stay, no sure and settled estate in this world. Whether we consider the matters of religion and God's worship, or the things of the world, we shall see them like unto chaff, vain, vile, uncertain, and mutable.

First, In matters of religion, for the worship and service of God, how vain and mutable the wicked are, the example of Judas doth demonstrate, who, being chosen to be one of the twelve, fell away afterward, dangerously and treacherously, Mat. xxvii. The like may be said of Demas, who made a glorious flourish for the time, and yet afterwards he fell in love with the world, 2 Tim. iv. 10. And the like may be said of Hymeneus, Philetus, and Alexander, who were counted famous, and esteemed as pillars of the church, yet they fell to renounce everlasting salvation, 2 Tim. ii. 17. To this purpose doth St John describe the estate of the backsliders in his time—'They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us,' 1 John ii. 19. Hereunto cometh that parable propounded by our Saviour Christ: Mat. xxi. 28, 'A certain man had two sons; and came to the eldest, and said, Son, go and work to-day in my vineyard. But he answered and said, I will not: yet afterwards he repented himself and went. Then came he to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I will, sir; and went not.' He seemed forward, but hung back. He promised much, but performed nothing at all. The like may be said of the rich man which came to our Saviour Christ and said, 'Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?' yet, when he was tried, he went away sorrowful.

Again, for their worldly estate, all their felicity and great pomp is but a dream: it is but as chaff. The least blast of God's wrath will overthrow all their happiness and prosperity; which, at the best, is most uncertain, and very mutable. Look upon Pharaoh, Saul, Abithophel, Absalom, Nebuchadnezzar, Nabal, and the rich fool. Job, setting out

the estate of the wicked, concludeth thus—‘They spend their days in pleasures, and suddenly go down to hell,’ Job xxi. 13. And there sheweth the cause. Their prosperity, alas! is not their own hand. ‘But the Lord doth make them as stubble before the wind, and as chaff shall they be dispersed.’ And David speaking of the prosperity of the wicked, sheweth withal how slippery and uncertain it is, that in a very moment they be gone, and like chaff are scattered abroad, Ps. vii. So that it doth appear that the estate of the wicked man is too fickle and uncertain, and is therefore well compared unto chaff.

And by this comparison is shewed that the wicked be most unlike to the godly, and therefore he compares them not to any tree, no not to a dead and withered tree, but to chaff.

First, Because as the godly man is rooted in Christ Jesus, and receiveth nourishment from him, good juice and good sap, the wicked are not so; but void of all juice and sap, dry as dust, chaff.

Secondly, Whereas the godly man is fruitful, the wicked are not so, but as chaff, unfruitful.

Thirdly, Whereas the godly man is permanent, and his estate durable, neither wind nor weather can shake him, being rooted and grounded in Christ. ‘The wicked are not so, but as chaff,’ even variable as the wind, every blast of false doctrine, every wind of temptation, and every trial for the gospel’s sake will blow them clean away.

*Use 1.* Let this admonish wicked men to look about them. Thine estate is not so good as thou thinkest it is. Although thou be rich, in honour, and in great preferment, thou seemest all this while to be like a great oak, or a tall cedar tree; but know thou art nothing less in the sight of God. Thou art like unto chaff, light, vain, loose, vile, unprofitable and variable, no firmness, and constancy at all in thee; yea, and mark what will follow, and be the end, unless thou repent and return unto God; He will come, ‘whose fan is in his hand, and he will gather his wheat into his garner, but the chaff will he burn with unquenchable fire,’ Mat. iii. 12. Oh that all wicked men would now examine themselves, how they are in the barn-floor of the Lord Jesus, whether as chaff or corn, for a day of winnowing will assuredly approach, wherein the Lord will then

gather his good corn into his garner, but then the chaff will he cast out to be burned with fire unquenchable. We must all of us pass under God’s fan, great, small, rich, poor, learned, ignorant, minister and people; and then, if thou shalt be found to be chaff, to the fire thou must forthwith go. And therefore let all God’s children take heed that they do not fashion themselves like unto the wicked; for as our ends are most unlike, even so our lives must be unlike; they live in sin after the fashion of the world; we must frame our lives after the word.

*Use 2.* Secondly, Let all God’s children learn to judge aright of the estate of all wicked men; they flourish indeed in the world, and who but they free from trouble, full of prosperity, whereas the godly man is troubled and afflicted; yea, often in great misery and disgrace of the world; and this is the thing that oftentimes doth trouble the godly. But if we will judge of them not by the eye of the body, but of the soul, according to God’s word, we shall see we shall have no great cause to wonder at them; much less to be grieved for them. Alas, poor souls, when they be at the best, they be but as chaff, vain, light, vile, and inconstant. ‘I saw,’ saith David, ‘the ungodly spreading himself like a green bay-tree, so I looked on him and passed by him, and lo he was gone, I sought him, but he could nowhere be found.’

Hitherto hath appeared what chaff is, and that the wicked are like the chaff naturally considered. Now, in a word, we are to consider how the wicked resemble chaff accidentally, and that two ways.

First, Chaff is preserved for a time, while it is in the field, with the good corn, lest both of them should perish together. This appeareth in the Gospel to be the care which God had, not to suffer the tares to be plucked up, for a time, lest they should pluck up the good wheat with them, Mat. xiii. 29. Even so the wicked are spared for a time for the godly’s sake, which otherwise could not live; even as the tares amongst the wheat were spared for the wheat’s sake.

And surely this might admonish all wicked and ungodly sinners to repent, and (in time) to turn unto God, and to esteem better of the company of God’s faithful servants and righteous children, here

in this world to make much of them, for they fare the better for them every day they rise, they enjoy all they have for their sakes, else God would soon make an end of them upon earth. If Noah and his family were in the ark, the flood would soon drown the rest. If Lot were out of Sodom, it would soon rain down fire and brimstone from heaven upon the wicked Sodomites. And therefore God's children may well be compared to a piece of cork cast into the sea full of nails, which bears up the nails, which otherwise would sink to the bottom one by one; even so the wicked are preserved for a time for the godly's sake.

But if they will still proceed to hate them above all things in the world; well, the time will come, when they shall think it the greatest misery in the world, to be severed and sundered from the company and society of the godly. But of this hereafter.

The other condition of chaff, accidentally considered, is the sitting or the separating the same from the good corn, which shall be in the harvest of God's general judgment, Mat. xiii. 30. For there be but two sorts of men—namely, the sheep and the goats, the godly and the bad, the elect and the reprobate; and these do live together here, even as the tares amongst the good wheat. But in the harvest of God's general judgment, they are separated, even as a shepherd doth divide his sheep from his goats.

Thus much for the first part of the similitude, where the wicked are compared to chaff; now cometh to be considered the condition of chaff

*Which the wind scattereth away.*

By *wind* (in this place) we are to understand the judgments of God, which in the Holy Scriptures is expressed by sundry things; as by fire and sword, arrows, sickle, and fan, &c., Mat. iii.; and in this same place by winds, 'The winds blow upon the house,' &c.

Now the judgments of God do resemble the wind in two things especially. First, It hath the bound from whence it cometh—viz., heaven. Secondly, It hath a bound to which it goeth—viz., earth.

1. Then the first consideration in the which the judgments of God are compared to the wind, is the place they come from. The wind, it cometh from above, even out of the Almighty's treasure-house; according to that of the prophet David, 'He bringeth

the winds out of his treasury,' Ps. cxxxv. 7. So that by what means soever the judgments of God are executed upon us, or in what kind soever, certainly they come from God, as the wind doth.

2. The second is the place it cometh unto, even the centre of the earth we dwell on. Such a one was that wind that came and beat upon the banqueting house of Job's children, Job i. 19. And what shall I say of the judgments of God which come so swiftly, even as the wind, upon Pharaoh, Saul, Ahab, Antiochus, Herod, and the like, whose destructions came suddenly from heaven as the wind upon them. And as the wind is invisible to the eye, even so come the judgments of God upon the wicked when they are most secure. Yea, when the wicked shall say, *Peace, peace*, then shall destruction come upon them suddenly, as the wind. Yea, and as the wind is most violent where it is most oppugned, as by the tallest trees, and the highest hills; so where the heart of man is lofty, he is so much the more open to the wind of God's judgments, as we may see in Pharaoh, Herod, Antiochus.

Now, in that the prophet hath compared the wicked to chaff, and the judgments of God to the wind; we learn from hence the irrevocableness of the destruction of the wicked. Alas! what is chaff to stand against the wind? and what is flesh and blood to resist the Almighty? This the prophet David shews most excellently, who, speaking of the enemies of Christ Jesus, and of the certainty of their destruction, saith, 'Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron,' Ps. ii. 9. Alas! what is an earthen pitcher before a bar of iron? a head of glass against a head of brass? How did the wind of God's judgments pursue Cain, when he had slain his innocent brother? Gen. iv. 11. Pharaoh seemed a mighty man, yet he proved but chaff when the wind of God's judgments did blow upon him. Herod thought himself to be some petty god, at what time he made his oration to the people; but he was less than man when the wind came, even the judgments of God; that he was eaten up of worms. Acts xii. 23.

*Use 1.* Hence we learn, that the power of God is infinite and absolute; all power is of God. 'He doth bring down the mighty from their seat.' Yea, he hath all creatures at a beck, and at a call, to humble man; yea, and the least of all creatures,



when it is armed and sent of God, is sufficient to destroy the wicked, as frogs, lice, flies, and the like creatures did Pharaoh and the Egyptians, Exod. x., and as the palmer-worm and the like kind of the caterpillars did the men of Judah and Israel, Joel i. 3, 4; and therefore this must needs be a terror unto the wicked, who are no stronger than the chaff to resist the wind of God's judgment. This may teach them humility, and pull down the haughtiness of their hearts, when they shall hear the irrevocableness of their destruction.

*Use 2.* Secondly. Seeing the destruction of the wicked is irrevocable, and that the judgments of God come suddenly, we are taught here that it is our duty to awake out of sin, and to be watchful over our own souls. We must not sleep in sin, neither give ourselves to security, but be careful and circumspect that we be not suddenly overtaken. This is that charge which our Saviour giveth, Mat. xxiv., 'Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in the which the Son of man will come.' The judgments of God are threatened to come upon thee suddenly as the wind. Thou knowest not whether thou shalt have an hour or a moment of time given thee to repent, thou mayest be smitten with sudden death. When thou risest out of thy bed, thou knowest not whether thou shalt lie down again; when thou liest down upon thy bed, thou knowest not what may happen unto thee ere it be day. 'Boast not of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth,' Prov. xxvii. 1. And therefore while it is to-day, let us repent, and labour to be reconciled to God in Christ, that when his judgments shall come as the wind suddenly, the destroyer may pass over us, and we remain safe under the shadow of the Almighty.

Hitherto hath the prophet described the woeful estate and condition of the wicked here in this life. Now in the next verse, by way of prophecy or threatening, he sets out their estate and condition in the life to come.

Ver. 5. *Therefore the wicked shall not be able to stand in judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.*

Here the prophet describes the wicked and ungodly man by his fearful end, and that which shall befall him hereafter. And that he draweth into two

phrases of speech: first, 'They shall not stand in judgment;' secondly, 'They shall not be associates with the just.' So that we see, that howsoever now the wicked bear it out, and seem to be the only men in the world, yet in the great day of the Lord, when we must all appear before his bar, that will judge justly without respect of persons, then these wretched shall not be able to stand; that is, to endure the sentence of the judge and his angry countenance, but shall receive the fearful doom of eternal death, 'Depart from me, ye cursed.'

Well, then, by this we learn that there shall be a judgment, wherein men must stand to appear before God, to give account of their work. And this we acknowledge in that article of our faith when we say, 'We believe that he shall come to judge both the quick and the dead.' 'Behold,' saith the Lord, 'the day cometh that shall burn as an oven. And all the proud and all the wicked shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up.' And our Saviour, alluding to that day, saith, 'Then will I say to them on my left hand,' &c. Again, 'He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness.' Now if there were no places in the Scriptures but this text, it might suffice to prove that there shall be a day of judgment.

But besides these testimonies there be certain reasons that prove the same, taken from the nature of God and his principal attributes, his mercy and justice, which we must needs confess, he is most true in both, he is most merciful and most just.

And therefore, having promised it shall go well with his children, that they shall be happy and blessed, and that the wicked shall be miserable and cursed; in these two respects it must needs be that there must be a day of judgment. For in this world, who endure more misery, grief, and wrong than God's children? who are contemned, mocked, misused, and by all means abused by wicked men? They are in want, sickness, persecution, in poverty, and a thousand miseries besides, Luke xvi. But the wicked flourish, live in wealth and ease, and all things that heart can wish. Now, then, seeing this is the estate of God's children in this world, full of troubles and miseries, and the wicked live at ease, according to their lusts, it must needs follow that there must be a day of judgment, when God shall

shew his mercy in blessing and crowning the virtues of his children; and likewise in executing justice upon the wicked and ungodly.

*Use 1.* Oh that men and women could often think of the time of the last judgment! Oh that we could bestow that time which we bestow upon our pleasures and foolish sports, to meditate on this day! Oh that men would bestow that time which they bestow on unprofitable, if not sinful, exercises; as carding, dicing, decking and painting these carcasses of theirs! Oh, I say, happy were we if we could bestow this time in thinking of this judgment! What shall then become of us for evermore?

There is no man so wretched and desperate, but he can wish with Balaam, 'Oh that I might die the death of the righteous, and that my last end might be like one of theirs!' Labour now then in time to become a new creature, walk with God in obedience, labour for sanctification; and this will cause thee to stand out in this judgment.

Now that the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, some may here object and say, This is that which we desire, that we may not appear before the face of that angry Judge, whose presence is so intolerable.

But, alas! this is not all; for then the wicked might seem to be blessed if they might here delight in sin, and drink down iniquity like water, and never be called to account for the same. Therefore the wicked shall appear in judgment; and yet not any whit contrary to this text, which saith, 'The wicked shall not stand in judgment;' and that in these four respects:—

First, In regard of their appearance there, 'The Lord will enter into judgment with all flesh;' if with all flesh, then chiefly with such kind of flesh as are species of that genus: so flesh, as that they are nothing but flesh, that have not the seed of the Spirit remaining in them.

Secondly, They must arise and appear in this judgment, in respect of the sinner's arraignment at God's judgment-bar: for we must not only appear in judgment, but 'before the judgment-seat of Christ.'

Thirdly, They must arise and appear in this judgment to be indicted: for God 'will bring every work of theirs into judgment, whether they be good or evil.'

Fourthly and lastly, They must arise and stand in this judgment to hear the sentence of the Judge of heaven and earth pass against them: 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,' Mat. xxv. 41. A thundering sentence indeed, able, if it were possible, to wound to death the hearts of the wicked, but they shall after death never die. Yea, every word of the sentence seems to be most fearful and terrible:—

First, What they shall do: *Depart.*

Secondly, How they shall depart: *Cursed.*

Thirdly, From whom: *From me.*

Fourthly, Whither: *Into fire.*

Fifthly, Into what fire: *Everlasting fire.*

Sixthly, By what right: *Prepared.*

Seventhly, With what company: *The devil and his angels.*

Hitherto, and thus far, the wicked must arise and stand in judgment; but after this sentence is once given, they shall never rise up to appear in judgment any more. But where it is said, 'They shall not stand in judgment,' this is meant only in respect of God's favour; for this is proper only to the godly, thus to stand in judgment, who are bold in respect of Jesus Christ their elder brother, in whose righteousness they appear.

*Use 1.* Oh that men would consider this,—high, low, rich, poor, noble, and simple,—that no wicked man shall stand in judgment, but shall hear the fearful sentence of eternal vengeance, 'Depart from me, ye cursed.' Oh how ready are men to put from them this day of reckoning! They seem to have made a league with death, and to be at an agreement with the grave, Isa. xxviii. 15. But the Lord will disannul this their agreement, and the time will come when these wicked wretches will be glad to put their heads in an auger hole, when they shall cry unto the rocks and hills to fall upon them, to hide them and to cover them from the wrath of God, the angry Judge, whom they are not able to endure. Who would buy gold at such a rate, or pleasures so dear, to lose his soul in hell-fire for ever, for the pleasures of sin for a season here?

*Use 2.* Secondly, We are taught here that as all wicked and ungodly men be wretched and miserable in their life; so at the day of judgment their estate is much more fearful, for it is said here, 'They shall

not stand in judgment,' but shall quake and tremble, as not being able to endure the angry countenance of the Judge; for now they shall see the books brought forth, and their sins laid open, Rev. xx. 12. O good Lord, what shall ungodly men do then? Which way shall they turn them? When they shall see the Judge stand above them with a naked sword to cut them off, and the devils ready to execute God's eternal judgments on them, poor souls, what shall become of them? How can they stand? How can they endure it? And yet they must undergo it and endure it.

But more than this, they must receive that fearful sentence of eternal vengeance, 'Depart, ye cursed,' &c. So as now they must remain in perpetual prison, in the dark dungeon of hell for ever, where the pains are endless, ceaseless, and remediless, they shall have no ease, no, not one drop of water to cool their tongue. And this word *everlasting torment* doth even kill the heart of the damned, for if a man lie in hell torments so many thousand years as he stars in the firmament or sand on the sea-shore, it were some comfort to a damned soul that once there might be an end thereof. But, alas! when he hath suffered torment so many years, the number to suffer still will ever remain infinite. God give us grace that we may become righteous, that we may stand in judgment.

The second part of the misery of a wicked man in the life to come, is, *He shall not stand in the assembly of the just.*

In these words is noted out unto us a second branch of the judgment of the wicked in the life to come: that they shall be severed and secluded from the company of the just.

Heaven is called the New Jerusalem, wherein enters no unclean thing, only this is the place where the just do abide. Here are all the holy patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; here are the apostles; here are the godly martyrs and constant witnesses of Christ's truth; here are all the saints that sleep in Christ; here they rest and sing continually, 'Praise, honour, and glory unto him that sitteth upon the throne;' they enjoy the presence of God, and see his face continually. Now, to be deprived of this place, and to be severed from this company, it is misery with a witness, and this is that misery

here pointed out in this second place, 'They shall not stand in the assembly of the just.'

The church is to be understood two ways, militant and triumphant, and from both of these the wicked are excluded, for howsoever the wicked live amongst the godly, as tares amongst the good wheat, as Cain, and Esau, and Judas did amongst the godly, yet they were not of the godly, 'They went out from us because they were not of us.' But this is not directly intended in this place, but of the church triumphant in the kingdom of heaven, where the godly enjoy Jesus Christ, 'In whose presence is the fulness of joy, and at whose right hand is pleasure for evermore,' Ps. xvi. 11. Here the wicked shall not stand in the assembly: for if Moses might not stand upon the holy ground before he had put off his shoes, Exod. iii., oh how much less shall sinful wretches stand in the presence of the ever-living God, having on the shoes of their sinful affection! Yea, it is now most just with God that such should be shut from heaven, the church triumphant, seeing they never warred in the church militant.

*Neither the sinners in the assembly of the just.*

Here, then, we learn that there are two sorts of men in the world, good and bad, sheep and goats, elect and reprobate. And here in this world they live together, but after death in the last judgment there shall be two places appointed for them: one on the right hand, another on the left; one in honour, the other in shame; one in joy and comfort, the other in fear and horror, Mat. xxv. 34. And as wicked men in this life could never abide the company and society of the godly, but did mock and scoff at them, and shun their company as much as they could, so in the great day of account, in the great and general separation, the sinners shall not appear in the assembly of the righteous, but shall be severed and sundered by the great shepherd of the sheep, the judge of the whole world.

Now that wicked men shun and avoid the company of the godly, and do desire and seek the company of the wicked, it is plain by experience, and therefore it is just with God, that at the last day they should be severed and secluded their company, and as they loved and delighted in the company of wicked men, and such as have no fear of God before their eyes, so now they shall have their bellyful of

their company. How did Cain hate Abel? Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron? Saul, David? the Jews, our Saviour Christ? Elymas, the company of Paul? And, on the contrary part, how one wicked man doth love the company of another like himself, common experience doth prove it.

And here wicked men be noisome and troublesome to the godly, as goats to sheep, they tread down their pasture, they trample in their water, and they push them with their horns, Ezek. iv. Christ's sheep now sustain sundry wrongs and injuries, and are much annoyed and vexed by those stinking and unruly goats, but there will come a day of separation, to the horror of the wicked and comfort of the godly.

Further, In these words we may consider the estate of the righteous at the last judgment,—that is, of the elect of God, such as have truly repented of their sins by faith, believe and embrace Jesus Christ, and are justified through his obedience in the sight of God. Surely their estate shall be blessed and happy, and so great that the very wicked shall be much ashamed and astonished to behold it.

First, They shall be set on Christ's right hand, which is no small honour and joy for poor silly souls, to be advanced to sit on the right hand of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the great judge of the world.

Secondly, They shall hear the blessed sentence, 'Come ye blessed,' &c.

Thirdly, They shall be put in real possession of eternal salvation, of the kingdom of heaven, and live in the blessed presence of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the elect angels, and blessed saints, where there shall be no sorrow, pain, sickness, &c. : 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours.' So, then, after death they have a sweet *quies est*, and a general discharge and freedom from all enemies of soul and body, from all trouble, pain, and grief; whereas the wicked and ungodly shall be in a clean contrary estate and condition, for they shall not come into the company of the righteous, nor shall have no part in that place of their comfort, honour, joy, and dignity, but shall be set on Christ's left hand, a place of exceeding sorrow and grief, shame and confusion, horror and trembling.

*Use 1.* This might admonish all wicked and ungodly sinners to repent in time, to turn to God by true repentance and amendment of their lives, to esteem better of the company of God's faithful servants and righteous children in this world, and to make much of them. But if they will still proceed to hate them, to set themselves against the godly, to shun their company, and to hate them above all the things in the world, well, yet remember the time will come that ye shall think it the greatest misery in the world that ye shall be severed and sundered from their company, and in so being, they shall be severed and sundered from the company and society of Jesus Christ himself, of God the Father, and all the blessed saints and angels of God in heaven: then in that day shall the righteous stand in great boldness before him that persecuted him, &c. Thus ye see the madness and extreme folly of wicked men, they hate them whom they ought most to love, and love them whom they ought most to dislike.

*Use 2.* Let men take heed with whom they join themselves in society, seeing with whom they keep company in this life, in death they shall partake with them, and after at the last judgment shall be joined with them.

He that now is familiar and a companion of ungodly men, atheists, papists, swearers, drunkards, scorners, &c., certainly, in death he shall be punished with them, and after death have his abiding with them for ever. So he that is now a companion with all those that fear God, surely he shall have a part with them in death, and at the last judgment shall be placed with them in joy and happiness, which shall never have an end.

It is thought to be a matter of little or no moment what company a man keeps, to live amongst swaggers, swearers, drunkards, atheists, papists, &c., but the truth is, it is a fearful sign of a reprobate, and he that is now a companion with them in their sins shall after death take part with them in their plagues.

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Ver. 6. *For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

Hitherto the prophet hath described the wonderful blessed estate of a godly man; as also the fearful and cursed estate of the wicked. Now, in this sixth

verse, which contains in it the second general part of the psalm, is laid down a reason, both of the happiness of the one, and also of the misery of the other.

The godly man is a blessed man. Why? because the Lord knoweth, that is, approveth of, the way of a righteous and godly man. He likes it and directs it; yea, takes care of it, and doth bless the way—that is, the life and conversation, the actions, studies, and endeavours of the righteous.

Secondly, The wicked are cursed and miserable. Why? because the Lord doth not thus know—that is, the Lord doth not like, nor allow of the wicked man. He doth not love nor approve of his life nor dealings, but rather dislikes him and all he doth; yea, he hates and abhors his vile, abominable, and wicked life. And therefore both he and his ways, that is, his studies, labours, and enterprises, shall perish, and come to destruction.

*Duct. 1.* In that the Lord is said to know the way of the righteous—that is, to like it, to love it, and to be well pleased with it, so as he will direct and bless it. Here is matter of exceeding comfort to every poor child of God, to every godly and righteous servant of God, that being justified by faith in Christ Jesus, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, live well, and lead a godly and righteous life; that howsoever the world contemns them, scoffs and scorns them, mocks and mows at them, revile and rail upon them, and esteem them as base and vile, yet here we see that the Lord loves them, and esteems highly of them; approves them as his, delights in them, to bless them and prosper them. 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm;' yea, he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of God's eye, and no assaults whatsoever shall be able to injure them. For 'godliness hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come;' and therefore let us labour to plant godliness in our hearts, and store them with the true fear of God, and in so doing, the Lord will both bless us and our poor endeavours.

This may serve to reprove the cursed practice of ungodly men. It is wonderful to see how bold they be to abuse God's servants, to mock them and to disgrace them, to slander and to revile them. They think them the worst men that live in the world; they traduce them and bring them on the stage; they load them with vile and odious names. Now,

what do they else than set themselves against God himself, seeing they hate them whom God loves?

And as this may serve for the terror of the wicked, so it serves to comfort every poor child of God. What though the world hate thee, so God love thee? Oh remember that the Lord loves and allows of thee. Now then, if God approve of thee, what though all men in the world did refuse or condemn thee? If the king should grace a man, and honour him, what would this man care for the contempt of a scullion boy? Well, let this be a comfort and encouragement unto us, that God knows and allows of us. For what were the favour and approbation of men if this were wanting?

*Object.* But how shall a man know whether God knoweth him thus with his special knowledge or not? I answer:

*Ans. 1.* First, If God know any man for his, by his special and effectual knowledge, then he begets in him the knowledge of himself. As the light of the sun falling on our eye, by whose light we behold the sun again. 'I know my sheep,' saith Christ, 'and they know me,' John x.

*Ans. 2.* Secondly, If God thus know any man with this special and effectual knowledge of his, so as he loves and likes of him, it begets the love of God in a man's heart. So as God loves him, he is inflamed to love God again, 1 John iv. 9; and in love unto him is loath to offend him, and most careful to please him. And therefore, if we would know whether we be thus known of God, let us labour to find our hearts thus inflamed with the love of him.

*Ans. 3.* Thirdly, Whom God knoweth thus, he chooseth to be his child in Christ Jesus, delights to bless him. Now, then, this works in the heart of a godly man another work, namely, to choose God to be his God, to set his heart on him, to delight in him, to adore him as his God, to love him, fear him, obey and call upon him, and to trust in him as his God.

Thus you see how a man may know whether God know him with this special and effectual knowledge, which is proper to the elect alone, namely, by these fruits and effects in our hearts. For as we see, though every man cannot come to see the king's broad seal, yet can discern the picture of it in wax, and say, this is the king's broad seal; so though

men cannot ascend to heaven to know the secret counsel of God, yet by these fruits and effects of his knowledge, men may know his will, whether they be his or not.

Well, to conclude. Seeing the Lord thus knows and acknowledgeth, yea, loves and likes of the life of a godly and righteous man, let us be encouraged to go through-stitch, and to resolve of this, never to be daunted or discouraged with the hard measure of ungodly men. All our care should be to please God, and to be approved of him; and therefore, so long as he doth approve of us, let us not think what man can do against us.

*But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

Here we learn that the whole life of a wicked man, and whatsoever he doth, is abominable: the Lord hates him, and all he doth. 'What have I to do with the multitude of your sacrifices?' saith the Lord. And again, 'The sacrifices of the wicked are abominable unto the Lord.' Now, if the best actions of a wicked man, his hearing, reading, praying, and receiving, be abominable to the Lord, how much more their swearing, cursing, banning, profaning the Sabbath, drunkenness, uncleanness, lying, stealing, &c.? Again,

Heb. xi. 6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' Now, no wicked man can have true faith, because faith purifies the heart, Acts xv. 9, and is never severed from true repentance and amendment of life; and therefore the way of the wicked, seem it never so goodly and glorious in the world, all their studies and endeavours shall perish, and come to destruction in the end. 'This is the portion of the wicked man, and the heritage that he shall have from God for his works,' Job xx. 29.

*Use.* This shews the state of most men to be miserable and unhappy. For only those be blessed whose lives do please God. Now, alas! what delight can God have in the filthy lives of most men, whose whole delight and study is in sin and wickedness, in all kind of lewdness and profaneness, have no care to please God, but even obstinately rebel against him? Surely the Lord hates them and all they do. Oh woeful condition of such sinful men, that betake themselves thus unto the way of sin! Not as though they walk therein but for a time, but as such as purpose to tread therein for ever. From this woeful estate the Lord deliver us, for Christ his sake, Amen.

## A MORNING PRAYER FOR A FAMILY.<sup>1</sup>

---

Lord, teach us to pray, that we may call upon thy name. Prepare our hearts to seek thee ;  
and open thou thy merciful ears to hear us.

**O** ETERNAL and ever-living Lord God, creator and continual preserver of all things both in heaven and in earth, by whose gracious providence, as we were at the first wonderfully and fearfully made, so we are no less preserved and kept unto this present. We here, the workmanship of thine own hands, desire to humble both soul and body before thee. And now, Lord, we being here in thy presence, we cannot but acknowledge and confess against ourselves our own unworthiness to come before thee to call upon thee, or to perform even the least duty that shall concern thy worship or glory. Our hearts, alas ! are no better than sinks of sin, and a mass of all-pollution and uncleanness ; and who can make that clean that is taken out of an unclean thing ? The thoughts and imaginations of the same must needs be evil continually, and we unto every good work prove reprobates. Yet, O Lord, seeing thou hast commanded us to call upon thee, and hast mercifully promised to be present with thy children to hear their prayers, and to grant their requests which they put up in faith unto thee ; O Lord, this doth give us boldness to come before thee ; and in confidence of thy goodness that thou wilt make good the same thy promise unto us at this time, we here offer up unto thee this morning sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving, humbly acknowledging and con-

fessing from the bottom of our hearts our manifold transgressions and offences which we have continually multiplied against thee, in thought, word, and deed, from the beginning of our days unto this present time. We acknowledge, O Lord, that our original corruption, in the which we were at the first conceived and born, and from the which there hath sprung forth the most bitter and unsavoury fruit of sin, apostasy, and rebellion, to the great dishonour of thy name, the wounding of our poor souls and consciences, and the evil example of others amongst whom we have lived ; by the which, O God, we confess that we have justly deserved that thy wrath and indignation should be poured out upon us, both in this life and in the life to come.

And therefore, O God, we come not here before thee in our own worthiness, but in the worthiness and mediation of Jesus Christ, beseeching thy gracious goodness for his sake to be merciful unto us, for his sake to forgive us all our offences, our visible sins, our secret sins, our sins of iniquity, our presumptuous sins against knowledge, against conscience, against thee, or against our brethren, in the time of our younger years, or in the days of our knowledge, as we must needs confess that in many things we have sinned all. We pray thee, O God, for Christ Jesus' sake, to forgive the same unto us, and persuade our souls and consciences more and more that thou art at peace with us, and that all our sins are done away in the blood of thy Son. And grant,

<sup>1</sup> These two prayers have no special connexion with the First Psalm. But as they were appended to the exposition of it by the author, so they are reproduced here.—Ed.

O God, by the assistance and direction of the same, thy Spirit, that with more freedom of mind and liberty of will we may serve thee, the ever-living and glorious God, in righteousness and true holiness unto the end of our days. And, good Lord, begin not only repentance and true conversion in us, but of thy great mercy perfect the same. Oh, lead us forward more and more towards perfection; increase in us that saving knowledge of thee and of thy Son Christ, our faith in thy promise, our repentance from dead works, our fear of thy holy name, our hatred of all our sins, and our love unto thy truth. Frame our weak hearts, good Lord, more and more to obedience unto thy holy and heavenly will, and teach us in all things to resign our wills unto thy holy will, and in time of affliction, as in time of prosperity, to depend upon thee, that we look not so much upon our own weakness, but may stay ourselves by thy power and promises.

And, good Lord, so comfort our sorrowful hearts and dejected souls, that find daily such cause of humiliation in ourselves, doing daily those things that we should not, and leaving undone those good things thou commandest. Oh, then, let us be truly humble for the same; and for thy mercy's sake give us better affections unto goodness, and power and ability to do that good thou commandest and requirest at our hands. That seeking in all things to honour thee, and to extol thy name while we live here, we may at the last behold thy face in glory.

And now, Lord, together with our prayers we are bold to add these praises unto thy great name, for the manifold favours and blessings, the which from time to time thou hast bestowed upon us for this life, especially for a better life. We thank thee for that it hath pleased thee of thy gracious goodness to elect and choose us to salvation before the world was, for calling us by thy word in time, for justifying us by thy Son Christ, and for giving us a certain expectation of a better life when this is ended; as also for the happy means of our salvation, thy sabbaths, word, and sacraments. Oh, it is thy great goodness, O Lord, that thou hast not deprived us of them all, inasmuch as we have from time to time walked so unworthy of thy love. Oh lay not to our charge our great unthankfulness, that we have not brought forth more fruit of thy word in our lives;

but give us, we pray thee, that for the time to come we may make more right steps to thy kingdom.

And we magnify thy name, O Lord, for all the temporal blessings which thou hast in mercy bestowed upon us—our health, peace, food, raiment, and for all the comforts of this life. O Lord, give us a right use of them, that we may not abuse them unto licentiousness, but provoke us daily by them to devote ourselves unto thee and thy service. We acknowledge thy goodness towards us the night that is now past, freeing us from many imminent dangers, both of soul and body, and giving us sweet and comfortable rest. We beseech thee, be with us this day, and all the days of our lives, and teach us to walk as children of the light, that thy name may be glorified by us; others may take good example, and we ourselves enjoy the peace of a good conscience, so as at last we may come to reign with thee in glory.

And, good Lord our God, together with ourselves, we commend unto thee the state of thy whole church dispersed over the whole world, beseeching thee that thou wilt call home those thou hast appointed unto life and salvation, whether Jews or Gentiles; keep the little flock from the rage of Satan, Antichrist, and all other enemies of their peace. And give thy gospel a free passage amongst us; Lord send it where it is not, and bless it where it is, that Babylon may fall and never rise up again. Bless the churches and kingdoms wherein we live, with the continuance of our peace and true religion. Be gracious unto the king and queen, whom thou in mercy hast set over us; make him a further instrument of much good in thy church; make his days amongst us the days of heaven, and his life after this life, grant that it may be blessed. Bless the hopeful Prince Charles, James the Duke of York, and the Lady Mary, together with the Lady Elizabeth and her royal posterity. Lord finish thy work begun in them, and make them all in their places worthy instruments of glory to thee, and much good to thy church. Bless all other in authority, the ministers of thy holy word, our afflicted brethren in body or mind, or both; let it please thee, O Lord, to stay them and support them in time of their distress, and give unto them a happy issue out of the same as it shall seem good unto thee. And fit us for harder times, whensoever it shall please thee to bring the same upon us; and



keep us, Lord, in those days by thy mighty power. And thus have we commended our suits unto thee, humbly praying thee to pardon our wants now at this time in the performance of this duty. And thou that art privy to our wants, better than we ourselves are, we pray thee take notice of them, and

minister unto us a gracious supply in thy own due time, even for Jesus Christ's sake, in whose name we conclude these our weak and imperfect prayers, in that perfect form of prayer which he himself hath further taught us, saying, 'Our Father, which art in heaven,' &c.

## AN EVENING PRAYER FOR A FAMILY.

O Lord, prepare our hearts to prayer.

**O** ETERNAL God, and our most loving and merciful Father in Jesus Christ, and in Christ our Father, it is thy own commandment that we should call upon thy name, and it is thy gracious and merciful promise that where two or three are gathered together in thy name, there thou wilt be present amongst them. We, thy poor and unworthy servants, dust and ashes, yet the workmanship of thy own hands, are bold to come before thee, to offer up unto thee this evening sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving. And now, O Lord, being here before thee, we cannot but acknowledge and confess against ourselves our own unworthiness, that we are grievous sinners, conceived in sin and born in iniquity, and whereof we have brought forth most vile fruits in our lives, to the great dishonour of thy name, the utter dismaying of our own consciences, and the evil example of our brethren; by the which we have deserved likewise thy wrath and heavy indignation should be poured out upon us, both in this life and that which is to come, in such sort as no creature in heaven and earth is able to reconcile us again to thy Majesty, but only thy Son Jesus Christ. And therefore, O Lord, we come not here to excuse ourselves, but to accuse ourselves, acknowledging that judgment and condemnation doth of right belong unto us, inasmuch as we have sinned against thee. But, O Lord, there is mercy with thee, and with thee there

is plentiful redemption. We entreat thee, therefore, O Lord, to be merciful unto us; and as we acknowledge our sin unto thee, so be thou faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Wash us thoroughly from our wickedness, and cleanse us from our sins; for we acknowledge, O Lord, that against thee we have sinned, and done our evils in thy sight. Thou hast been a guide unto all our ways, who alone art the searcher of the heart, and the trier of the reins. To thee, therefore, O Lord, do we come, to crave the pardon of our sins, both for the guilt and punishment of the same, that so they may not draw down upon us our deserved judgment. And we entreat thee likewise, as to pardon our sins that are past in our lives, so to arm and strengthen us against sin for the time to come. Oh, we have woeful experience in ourselves of the weakness of our nature—how ready we are to fall from thee, and cannot keep so constant a watch over our own ways, nor over our own hearts, but still are ready to start aside. O Lord, direct us aright in the paths of thy commandments; let thy good Spirit lead us forth into all truth; and these hearts of ours, that by nature are so fraught with sin and wickedness, we pray thee alter and change. And bring into subjection daily every thought, and whatsoever thing else is in us, into obedience unto Christ. Let us find daily more

and more the power of Christ's death, mortifying sin in us; and the efficacy of his resurrection, raising us daily out of the grave of sin into newness of life. And give us, Lord, that we may dedicate ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be lively, holy, and acceptable sacrifices to thee. Let thy love shewed unto us constrain us to love thee again, who first lovedst us. Thou, O Lord, hast made us, and not we ourselves; thou hast made us not beasts, but men and women, yea, after thy own image; thou didst preserve us in our mother's womb, and didst nourish us when we did hang upon the breast; thou hast still in mercy provided for us, and heaped upon us many blessings, which others want and stand in need of. O Lord, give us a right use of all thy mercies; especially for that thou hast let us live in such a happy season of thy gospel, in time of peace and prosperity, wherein thou dost by thy word continually call at the door of our hearts, and labourest our conversion. O Lord, we can never sufficiently admire thy goodness herein, and the rather because we have from time to time walked so unworthy of thy love. Oh forgive us, O Lord, our unthankfulness herein, and let us now walk as children of the light. Oh, it is too much, Lord, that we have spent the time that is last past according to the lusts of the flesh. Give us grace that we may spend that short time that yet remaineth according to thy will. Set before us always the shortness of our lives, the day of death, sure in the end, unsure in the time, that we may be fully prepared for that second coming of our Saviour Christ unto judgment. And now in the time of our prosperity, Lord, teach us to think of the time of adversity; and in the time of our health, let us remember the times of sickness, and the hour of death which shall come upon all flesh. Oh, let us be mindful of our latter end! let us number our days aright, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom, and ever mind that reckoning and account which one day we shall give unto thee. Make us, while we live here, to be humble-minded towards our

brethren, that we be lowly in our own eyes, that we get contented hearts, pure affections, chaste minds, and wise behaviour; and all other gifts of thy own Spirit that may adorn us in thy sight, and may add unto the credit of the truth we profess.

And, good Lord, we pray thee, accept of our thanksgiving unto thy Majesty, for all thy mercies and blessings, from time to time bestowed upon us for this life, especially for a better life. We praise thee for our election, vocation, justification, sanctification, continual preservation, and the assurance that thou hast given us of a better life when this is ended; as also for all temporal blessings—health, peace, and prosperity: for thy goodness extended towards us this day that is past; that thou hast gone in and out before us, and freed us from many dangers of soul and body, and brought us with peace and comfort unto the beginning of this night. Lord, watch over us by thy Spirit and presence. Give us a holy and sanctified use of our rest and sleep, and fit us for the duties of the next day; especially, O Lord, fit us for that day that shall never give place to night. Be good unto thy whole church; forgive the crying offences of our times, and of this kingdom; bless our noble king and queen from all dangers, both of soul and body; bless the hopeful Prince Charles, James, the Duke of York, and the Lady Mary, together with the Lady Elizabeth, and all her royal issue; bless all others in authority, from the highest unto the lowest, the ministers of thy word, the Commons of this realm, and all that in Christian duty we are bound in our prayers to commend unto thee. Lord hear them for us, and hear us for them, and hear thy Son Christ Jesus for us all; and grant unto us all good things that thou in thy wisdom knowest more expedient to give than we are to ask, even for Jesus Christ's sake; to whom with thee, O Father, together with the blessed Spirit, we acknowledge to be due, and desire to give, all honour, praise, and glory, both now and for ever. Amen.

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# EXCELLENT ENCOURAGEMENTS

AGAINST

## AFFLICTIONS,

CONTAINING

DAVID'S TRIUMPH OVER DISTRESS, ON PSALM XXVII.

DAVID'S HEART'S DESIRE, ON PSALM LXXXIV.

THE CHURCH'S EXERCISE UNDER AFFLICTION, ON PSALM LXXXV.

THE GREAT CHARTER OF THE CHURCH, ON PSALM LXXXVII.

BY

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LONDON: JAMES NISBET & CO. DUBLIN: G. HERBERT.

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M.DCCC.LXVIII.



# DAVID'S TRIUMPH OVER DISTRESS;

OR,

## AN EXPOSITION OF PSALM XXVII.

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VER. 1. *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?*

This psalm, as the title shews, was penned by David, that kingly prophet, the sweet psalmist of Israel; for the Spirit of the Lord spake by him, and his word was in his tongue, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2, which circumstance well observed will give strength to the application of every good duty pressed upon us by his example in the particular branches of the psalm.

The time when this psalm was penned may probably be guessed, by the matter of it, to have been when he was persecuted by the hand of Saul and his followers, of whose cruelty he complains, ver. 2, and prays against them, ver. 12.

The chief matter of it is a notable expression of affiance and confidence in God in his greatest dangers, commending the same by the notable fruits and effects thereof.

His godly affiance he testifieth three ways: first, By plain and express profession thereof, in sweet variety of phrase and gracious application, by sundry remarkable fruits and effects thereof to be seen in his godly behaviour, in the six first verses.

Secondly, By humble prayer and supplication for audience, mercy, favour, instruction, and preservation, vers. 7, &c., to 13.

Thirdly, By a godly provocation of his own soul, upon good ground, still to wait upon God, vers. 13, 14.

Ver. 1. For the first: David's affiance and confidence in God is very elegantly, in sweet variety of phrase, plainly testified in the first verse, when he calleth the Lord his light and his salvation, and the strength of his life; and there also is amplified by a notable effect of godly security, in freedom from servile fear, propounded by way of interrogation, and also twice repeated for better assurance.

In all the three titles which he gives to God there is a sacred trope, *metonymia effecti*, the effect is put for the efficient. For, to speak properly, God was the author and fountain of light, salvation, and of strength, and not the things themselves. Likewise, in the first word, there is another trope, *metaphora*, a metaphor; for light is taken, in a translate and borrowed sense, for joy and gladness, as Esther viii. 16, which is to the heart a pleasant thing; as light is to the eye, Eccles. xi. 7. So as his meaning is to encourage his heart against the reproach of his enemies, that would bid him be packing to hide himself in mountains and deserts, as Ps. xi. 1, seeing the king himself did seek his life. Why, saith David, I have Jehovah the true God for the author of joy and gladness to my heart, the giver of safety

to my person, and of strength unto my life, whom should I fear? Should I be afraid of Saul, or any other man, whenas the Lord is my comfort, by undertaking my safety, and girding me with strength? as Ps. xviii. 32.

In the words thus understood, note two things: first, What God was to David; secondly, What benefit David reaped thereby. For the first.

The true God is unto David the fountain of gladness to his heart, the author of safety to his person, and the giver of strength and might for the preservation of his life.

For light of comfort, see Ps. xviii. 28, 'Thou wilt light my candle,'—that is, increase my small comfort; 'the Lord my God will lighten my darkness,'—that is, give me comfort and joy, instead of misery and sorrow. Hence he calls God his exceeding joy, Ps. xliii. 4. And that he was the author of his safety, see Ps. iii. 3, 'Thou, Lord, art a shield for me;' and Ps. iv. 8, 'Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.' For giving him strength and might, see Ps. xviii. 2, 'The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength.' Ver. 32, 'It is God that girdeth me with strength.' Ver. 39, 'Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle.'

The reason or ground of this happiness, is David's being in covenant with God, as God himself testified of David; calling him his servant, whom he anointed with his holy oil, and promising that his faithfulness and mercy shall be with him; yea, his mercy will he keep for him for ever, and his covenant shall stand fast with him. 'He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation,' Ps. lxxix. 20, 21, 24, 26, 28. And David himself layeth claim to this covenant with God: Ps. cxix. 94, 'I am thine, save me;' and Ps. xxiii. 1, 'The Lord is my shepherd;' and in very many psalms he calleth the Lord his God, as Ps. vii. 1, 'O Lord my God, in thee will I put my trust;' and ver. 3, 'O Lord my God.'

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways; first, Touching God's all-sufficiency in himself, for all his children, for whatsoever they want, or need; else David would never have said with assurance, that God became

so many great blessings unto him, as here he doth, and in many other places, as Ps. xviii. 2, and cxliv. 1, 2, 'My strength, my goodness, my fortress, my high tower, and my deliverer, my shield,' &c. This point the Lord taught Abraham plainly: Gen. xvii. 1, 'I am God all-sufficient,' or 'almighty.'

Secondly, This shews plainly the happy estate of those that stand rightly in covenant with God; as David saith, 'Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,' Ps. cxxxiii. 12. For God being in himself all-sufficient, becomes all in all to those that be his people by covenant. Ps. ciii. 17, 18, 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant. His eyes run to and fro, throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him,' 2 Chron. xvi. 9. 'He will make all his goodness pass before them,' Exod. xxxiii. 19. 'He will bless them, in their basket, in their dough, within the house, and in the field,' Deut. xxviii. 1, 2, &c., to 15. Hereupon David saith he shall not lack, Ps. xxiii. 1; and the church saith she will not fear, having God for her refuge and strength, Ps. xli. 1, 2, 5, with Isa. xxxiii. 21.

For admonition, this serves three ways: first, Seeing this was David's great happiness in his troubles, that he could say, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation,' &c., that we should search and try, whether God be that to us which he was to David. And this may be known of every child of God at this day. For, first, If God be the light of grace and comfort to thy soul in Christ Jesus, he will be the light of joy and gladness in his providence to thy heart; and if he be spiritual salvation in Christ Jesus, he will not deny thee temporal preservation; and if he be the strength of thy soul in grace, he will become the strength of thy life in nature. In this case thou mayest reason, as David did: Ps. lvi. 13, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death, wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling?'

Now the evidence of these heavenly and spiritual blessings from God is this: first, That he becomes the light of grace unto our souls appears three ways. First, By our true repentance, whereby we awake from the sleep, and stand up from the death of sin,



Eph. v. 14: for such as walk in darkness, and yet lay claim to fellowship with God, who is pure light, do but lie in their profession, 1 John i. 6.

Secondly, By a constant and conscionable practice of new obedience, according to the rule of God's word, which is doing the truth, John iii. 21; for such have fellowship with Christ, and with the true members of his church, 1 John i. 7.

Thirdly, If we suffer for the gospel, and for righteousness' sake, when we are called thereunto: Heb. x. 32, 'After ye were enlightened, ye endured a great fight through affliction,' for to believers it is 'given, not only to believe, but to suffer.' Phil. i. 29.

Secondly, That God becomes our spiritual and eternal salvation is thus known: first, If he have saved us from sin, in regard of dominion, so as corruption doth not reign, see Mat. i. 21, with Luke i. 71, 74, 75, and 1 Pet. i. 18.

Secondly, If he have wrought in our hearts the grace of true faith, whereby we rest and rely on the merits of Jesus Christ for justification and salvation, see John v. 24, with 1 John v. 10, 14.

Thirdly, If he have drawn our hearts to love the brethren: 1 John iii. 14, 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.'

Thirdly, The Lord doth manifest himself to become our spiritual strength when he hath enabled us by grace to know and use that spiritual armour mentioned, Eph. vi. 10, &c., 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; put on the whole armour of God, the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes of peace, (which be Christian patience,) the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, and prayer for strength, skill, and blessing in the use of all the former.'

Secondly, If we find defect in the forenamed blessings, we must give all diligence thereunto, as 2 Pet. i. 5, &c., to the 10th verse. And the way is, to get rightly into covenant with God through Christ Jesus, in whom God becomes all things unto us that be needful, especially for our spiritual welfare; and to get into covenant, we must both repent of our sins, for so John prepared the way before Christ, Mat. iii. 3, and made ready a people for him, Luke i. 17. Also labour to get the grace of faith, for that

is ingrafting grace, Rom. xi. 17, 20. Now the means of both these is the word and prayer. The law prepares the heart for grace by the sight of sin, and by working humiliation for sin, as Rom. vii. 11; 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. The gospel is the word of his grace, Acts xx. 32, and by the blessing of the Spirit is immortal seed, 1 Pet. i. 23, 25; it is the word of faith, Rom. x. 8, 17, and prayer obtains the Spirit, Luke xi. 13, which is the spirit of faith, 2 Cor. iv. 13, therefore the disciples by prayer sought faith of Christ, Luke xvii. 5.

Thirdly, In the fruition of any of these blessings, see whither to return the honour and praise,—namely, to him that became all these to David. And, indeed, thus have the godly, for some one or more of these, continual cause of praise and thanks to God; therefore we must 'in all things give thanks,' 1 Thes. v. 18.

For comfort, this makes greatly to the godly, who make conscience of their ways, and endeavour to keep covenant with God. For God will become all these unto them, as he was to David, whereupon they may rejoice, as Ps. xxi. 1, and say they shall not lack, as Ps. xxiii. 1, for their God is all-sufficient for them, as Gen. xvii. 1.

We have seen what God became to David; now we come to see the second thing to be noted in the verse, the benefit which David reaped by having the Lord for his light and salvation, and for the strength of his life,—namely, hereby he was freed from human slavish fear and terror. This he confidently expresseth to be certain, as well by the manner of propounding it, by way of question, which here implieth a more vehement negation, as also by the repetition of his freedom, which shews that his heart herein was resolute; as Gen. xli. 32, the dream is doubled to give certainty.

Mark, then, David's confidence and courage; having the Lord for his God, he is armed against all fear of men or other creatures: Ps. cxviii. 6, 'The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?' Ps. xxiii. 1-4, 'The Lord is my shepherd, &c. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none evil.' Ps. iii. 3-6, 'Thou Lord art a buckler for me; I will not be afraid of ten thousand of the people, that shall beset me round about.'

The reason is, because having the Lord for his God by covenant, he had title to God's power, which is almighty, for his defence and safety; and that upon God's sure word and promise: See Ps. xci. 1, &c. 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night,' &c.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction two ways: first, see here, That there is great gain in true godliness, as 1 Tim. vi. 6, and much fruit in religion to those that attain to true righteousness, as Ps. lviii. 11; for such as be truly godly be in sure covenant with God, and thereby have right and title to the great comforts and blessings which God's own divine properties afford unto the sons of men; as here, for instance, to be freed from human servile fear by their right and interest to God's power and might; for what needs he fear that hath God's power for his defence? The three children did hereby encourage themselves in great present danger: Dan. iii. 16, 17, 'We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand.'

And for assurance hereof, mark all God's gracious promises of protection and preservation to the godly, as Isa. xli. 14, 'Fear not, thou worm Jacob,' &c.; Isa. xliii. 1-3, 'Now saith the Lord that created thee, O Israel, fear not; for I have redeemed thee, and called thee by thy name: thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee,' &c.; Isa. li. 11-13, 'The redeemed of the Lord shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. I, even I, am he that comforteth thee: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass? and forgettest the Lord thy maker,' &c. Add hereto Jer. xlvi. 27, 28, 'Fear not thou, O my servant Jacob; for I will save thee: I am with thee.'

*Object.* But we shall find that the most godly do fear, as David himself; Ps. cxvi. 11, 'I said in my haste, all men are liars;' and in 1 Sam. xxvii. 1, 'I shall now perish one day by thine hand of Saul.'

*Ans.* This comes from the weakness of their faith, as Mat. xiv. 30, 31. Peter feared, though he had Christ's word for his warrant, through the weakness of his faith, which may also be increased by present guilt in some sin.

*Object.* But the godly sometimes fly and fall before their enemies, and so cannot but fear.

*Ans.* All promises of temporal blessings, such as freedom from human fear is, are to be understood with exception of the cross; that is, must give way to God's correction for sin, as in David, 2 Sam. xii. 14, and to God's making trial of grace, as in Job, chap. ii. 3.

Secondly, Here see the true ground of that difference which is between the wicked and the godly, about slavish fear and godly boldness, plainly testified by Solomon: Prov. xxviii. 1, 'The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous is bold as a lion.' This cometh hence, the godly have the Lord with them and for them, and that makes them bold; but the wicked have the Lord against them, and that strikes their hearts with fear and dread. See the truth of this in instance: Moses leads all the people of Israel boldly through the Red Sea; Pharaoh followeth boldly for a while, but at length he and all his hosts are afraid, and fly away, and are drowned, Heb. xi. 29, with Exod. xiv. 25. And at Christ's resurrection the keepers are as dead men for fear, but the women that sought Jesus are bid not to be afraid, Mat. xxviii. 4, 5.

For admonition, it serves two ways: first, To take notice, that the true grounds of courage and boldness is this, that a man hath the true God for his God; that so, whosoever would be comfortable and courageous in the evil day, do labour for this estate, to have the true God for his God. It is not only true that affliction followeth sinners, so as evil shall hunt the wicked person to destruction, Ps. cxl. 11; but even the godly themselves are subject to many miseries, as Ps. xxxiv. 19; 'Through manifold tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God,' Acts xiv. 22. Now, unless God be for us, the heart will fail when evils come, as Nabal's did, 1 Sam. xxv. 37. And none indeed have the Lord for them, but those that stand rightly in covenant with God; which be such as repent of their sins, believe in the Lord Jesus, and walk in new obedience. This is

wholesome doctrine, for soldiers in war, mariners on the sea, and for every one in evil times.

Secondly, Those that have true courage and comfort in evil times, must learn hence to give God all the glory. For this is the Lord's gift, as David confesseth, Ps. xviii. 29, &c.

Ver. 2. *When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*

Here David gives instance, from his own experience, of God's powerful preservation of him in extreme danger; which no doubt he propounds as the ground of that great confidence professed in the former verse, as in like case he encouraged himself to encounter in fight with great Goliath, because God had formerly strengthened him against a lion and a bear, 1 Sam. xvii. 33-35.

In the instance here made, we have three things to note. First, The state and condition of David's enemies; they are 'wicked' men. Secondly, Their purpose and attempt against David; they came upon him 'to eat up his flesh'—that is, utterly to destroy him, as the roaring lion devoureth a little sheep. Thirdly, The issue and success of their attempt; 'they stumbled and fell.'

For the first note, David's enemies and foes are wicked men: Ps. iii. 7, 'Thou hast smitten all mine enemies on the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.' Ps. v. 89, David praying for safety, because of his enemies, saith, 'There is no faithfulness in their mouths, their inward parts are very wickedness,' &c. Ps. vi. 8, he calls his enemies 'workers of iniquity.' Ps. xvii. 9, the wicked that oppress him are his enemies; and ver. 13, 'Deliver my soul from the wicked.'

The reason whereof is the enmity put by God himself between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, Gen. iii. 15, which David found: Ps. xxxviii. 19, 20, 'They that render evil for good are mine adversaries, because I follow the thing that good is;' and our Saviour Christ, John vii. 7, 'The world hateth me, because I testify of it that the deeds thereof are evil.' Who also foretold his disciples hereof, John xv. 15, 'If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the

world, therefore the world hateth you;' and John xvi. 33, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation.'

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, it shews plainly what the godly must expect and look for in this world at the hands of wicked men,—namely, all bitter opposition and enmity that may be; as Christ Jesus told his disciples, 'Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake;' and therefore tells them that he sent them forth as sheep into the midst of wolves, Mat. x. 16. Which thing David had found long before, and thereupon complains: 'My soul is among lions, and I lie amongst the children of men, that are set on fire, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword,' Ps. lvii. 4. 'And mine enemies, workers of iniquity, lie in wait for my soul,' Ps. lix. 1-3. 'My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace, but when I speak they are for war,' Ps. exx. 6, 7. This Paul likewise felt: 'The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city that bonds and afflictions abide me,' Acts xx. 23. See 2 Cor. xi. 23, 'In stripes above measure, in prison more frequent, in death oft.' Yea, it was the case of the rest of the apostles as well as his. 'I think,' saith he, 'that God hath set us forth, the last apostles, as it were, appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, unto angels, and to men,' 1 Cor. iv. 9.

For admonition, it serves two ways: first, To the wicked, that they consider their estate in God's sight, when they are so spitefully bent against the godly: surely this is that venomous corruption which they receive from the old serpent the devil. This Paul accounted the madness of his natural estate: 'And being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them unto strange cities,' Acts xxvi. 11.

Secondly, To the godly, to be both wise as serpents and harmless as doves, and to beware of men, Mat. x. 16, 17. So did David: 'I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace even from good,' Ps. xxxix. 1, 2.

For comfort, this makes greatly to the godly, that their adversaries are wicked men: for they may hereon rest assured that God will not join with

their enemies, unless it be for trial of grace, as in Job, or for the sins of the godly in forsaking him; for then the Lord may justly use the wicked as rods and scourges for their correction; as Isa. x. 5, 6, 'O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.' So Job viii. 20, 'Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil-doers.' Indeed, if we forsake him, he will forsake us, 2 Chron. xv. 2. 'Rejoice, therefore, O ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land and to his people.' Deut. xxxii. 43. Consider the Lord's wish: 'Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies,' &c., Ps. lxxxi. 13-15. Add Isa. 1. 10, and liv. 8, 14, 15.

The second thing to be noted here is, The purpose and attempt of David's enemies against him; they came upon him to eat up his flesh,—that is, utterly to destroy him. Mark, then,

David's enemies did fully purpose and endeavour his utter ruin and destruction. 'The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of the ungodly made me afraid,' Ps. xviii. 4. 'Mine enemies would daily swallow me up; they be many that fight against me,' Ps. lvi. 2. 'They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul,' ver. 6. 'My soul is among lions: I lie among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword,' Ps. lvii. 4. 'They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty,' Ps. lxxix. 4.

The reason hereof was, their spiteful wrath and hatred against David; as he confesseth, in the behalf of the church with himself. 'If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us,' Ps. cxxiv. 2, 3. And this spiteful wrath was kindled in them against David on two occasions: first, Because of his religion and piety, with which their corruption could admit no accord; as the apostle doth intimate,

2 Cor. vi. 14, and David confesseth, Ps. xxxviii. 20, 'They that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is;' as Cain slew his brother, 'because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous,' 1 John iii. 12, and herein the devil set them a-work to hinder religion, as Rev. ii. 10. Secondly, Because of the honour and dignity whereto God had advanced him. 'O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame?' Ps. iv. 2. 'How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? They only consult to cast him down from his excellency,' Ps. lxxii. 4. This Saul himself confesseth in his fury to Jonathan his son. 'As long as the son of Jesse'—that is, David—'liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom; wherefore now fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die,' 1 Sam. xx. 31.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction it serves two ways. First, To discover the exceeding measure of corruption that is in natural men, and thereupon their fearful estate in soul to Godward. Their spiteful hearts and raging wrath against the godly, whereby nothing will satisfy them but their utter ruin and destruction, shews the great measure of their corruption. When they will eat up God's people as they eat bread, that is, devour them with delight, this shews they are corrupt, as Ps. liii. 1, 3, 4. And that they are so spiteful-minded is plain by instance: Ps. lxxxiii. 4, 'They have said, Come and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.' Ten nations were confederate against Israel with this resolution. The like we may see in the carnal Israelites against Paul: Acts xxii. 22, 'They lift up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live;' yea, in Paul himself, before he was converted, for he persecuted Christianity unto the death, Acts xxii. 4, and was mad against this way, chap. xxvi. 11. Now this malice and hatred against the godly shew them to be the children of the devil, as 1 John iii. 12, and John viii. 40, 44.

Secondly, To manifest that there is a special providence of God over his church and children, that preserves and keeps them notwithstanding all the spite and rage of the wicked against them, as Ps. cx. 12-14, 'When they were but a few men in num-

ber; yea, very few, and strangers in the land. When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people; he suffered no man to do them wrong.'

For admonition it serves two ways. First, To the wicked; to consider of their corrupt affection in spite and hatred against the godly, and whence it comes, that so they may discern their fearful state in soul, and labour to alter it. How they stand affected their own hearts can tell them, even as Ahab was to Micaiah, 1 Kings xiii. 8, 'I hate him.' But whence is it? see James iii. 14, 15; even from the devil, as Acts xiii. 10; if enemy of righteousness, then child of the devil, as John viii. 40, 44. Now the way of change from that estate is by regeneration, which, indeed, is God's work, yet in the use of means ordained by himself, even the word and prayer, for the word is the seed of our new birth, 1 Pet. i. 23, and prayer obtains the Spirit, which puts life thereto, see Luke xi. 13, and John vi. 63.

Secondly, To the godly; often to bethink themselves what their religion may bring upon them from the wicked, even all their wrath and hatred, fury and rage, that so they may get the sure shelter against it, which is only this, to have God for them, as Ps. cxviii. 6, 'The Lord is on my side, I will not fear; what can man do unto me?' For he is the safe keeper, Ps. cxxi. 4, 5, whereon David assures himself of safety, Ps. iii. 3, 6, and Jeremiah, chap. xx. 15. Now he is ours by covenant, and continues for us while we keep fast to him in uprightness of heart: see 2 Chron. xv. 2, 'The Lord is with you, while ye be with him;' and chap. xvi. 9, '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.' Now a perfect heart is discerned by an obedient life: Isa. xxxviii. 3, 'I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight;' with Job i. 1, 'That man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil.'

The third thing to be noted here is the issue and success of the cruel attempt of David's enemies against him. They did not only fail of their purpose against David, but even themselves stumbled and fell; see this plainly both in his particular

combat with Goliath, 1 Sam. xvii. 44-49, who said he would give David's flesh to the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field; but it fell out otherwise. Also in manifold battles that he fought against the Philistines, whereof he saith in general, Ps. cxviii. 10, 12, 'All nations compassed me about. They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns.' The truth thereof, see 1 Chron. xiv. 8, &c., when the Philistines came up against him two several times in great abundance, and brought their gods with them, which he burned with fire at Baalperazim, ver. 12, &c. See also Ps. xxxvii. 14, 15, 'The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.'

The reason or cause hereof was in God, who for just causes stood for David, and set himself against David's enemies. God stood with David for these causes: first, He found him out, and chose him to do him service in that place and state wherein he was so mightily opposed by his enemies: see Ps. lxxxix. 20, 21, 'I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him,' &c.; as Acts xiii. 22, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart.' Ps. lxxviii. 70, 'He chose David his servant, and took him from the sheepfold.'

Secondly, David trusted in God, and so was holpen: Ps. lxii. 1-3, 'Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not greatly be moved. How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.' Ps. xxi. 7, 8, 'The king trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved,' &c. Ps. xci. 1, 2, 9, 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,' &c.

Thirdly, David prayed unto the Lord, and so was preserved: Ps. lvi. 9, 'When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.' Ps. xxxiv. 4, 'I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.'

Ver. 6, 'This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.' This duty hath God's promise: Ps. l. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.'

Fourthly, David made conscience of sin and walked in obedience: Ps. xviii. 21, 24, 'For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness.'

Now for his enemies, God would not be with them for these causes: first, They were not called of God, nor sent by him against David, Ps. x. 2: pride, malice, and covetousness stir up the wicked.

Secondly, They were wicked men, workers of iniquity, as ver. 1, with whom God will not join for help and assistance: Job viii. 20, 'God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil-doers.' Ps. xciv. 20, 'Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by law?' Ps. v. 4-6, 'Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.' &c.: Ps. lvi. 7, 'Shall they escape by iniquity?'

Thirdly, David's enemies did neither regard God's word nor God's works, and so could not prosper. For neglect of God's word, see Ps. cxix. 126, 'It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law.' Ps. l. 16, 17, 'Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, &c., seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?' And for his works, Ps. xxviii. 5, 'Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.'

Fourthly, David's enemies trusted in their own might, and outward means: Ps. iii. 2, 'Many say of my soul, there is no help for him in God.' 2 Sam. xvii. 12, 'Therefore I counsel, &c. We will light upon him, as the dew falleth on the ground; and of him, and of all the men that are with him, there shall not be left so much as one.' Ps. xxi. 7, 8, 'Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. They are brought down, and fallen, but we are risen, and stand upright.'

*Obj. et.* Yet sometimes this is otherwise, as the

psalmist complaineth, Ps. lxxxix. 38, 39, 43, 'But thou hast cast off, and abhorred; thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant; thou hast profaned his crown, by casting it to the ground. Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword; and hast not made him to stand in the battle.' The like complaint, see Ps. xlv. 9, 10, &c., 'But thou hast cast off and put us to shame, and goest not forth with our armies. Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy, and they which hate us spoil for themselves.'

*Ans.* Here we must consider the nature of God's promises: for though such as concern redemption and salvation in Christ be most sure and certain, *amen* and *amen*, 2 Cor. i. 10, yet the promises of temporal blessings are conditional, and must be understood with the exception of the cross,—that is, so as God, either for trial of grace, or correction for sin, may deal otherwise; as we may see in good king Josiah, who for the sins of the land, that hastened God's judgments, fell by the hand of Pharaoh-Necho.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction; see what a great blessing and privilege it is to stand rightly in covenant with God, whereby he becometh light or salvation to a man, or to a people, and the strength of their life; for so shall they find extraordinary preservation in time of danger, and strange deliverance beyond human expectation, as here David confesseth, and the people of Israel found many a time; as when they were pursued by Pharaoh at the Red Sea, Exod. xiv. 10, 13; so also when Joshua won Jericho, Josh. vi. 21; Ai, chap. viii. 28; and slew the five kings of the Amorites, who fought against Gibeon, chap. x. 15, &c., in which fight the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day, ver. 13. And afterward, when divers other kings, with all their power, came to fight against Joshua, with much people, as the sand upon the sea-shore for multitude, with horses and chariots very many, Joshua discomfited them all, Josh. xi. 1, 2, 5, 6; and the Anakims, against whom formerly none could stand, Deut. ix. 2; yet Joshua drave them out, and destroyed them

utterly, and their cities, Josh. xi. 21, 22. The like we may see in the strange victories, in the book of the Judges, by Deborah and Barak against Sisera, Judges iv. 15, &c. By Gideon against the Midianites, chap. vii. 22, &c. By Jephthah against the Ammonites, chap. xi. 32, 33. By Samson against the Philistines, chaps. xv. and xvi.; and so by Jonathan and his armour-bearer, against a garrison of the Philistines, 1 Sam. xiv. 15. By David's many victories over them before-mentioned; by Asa against the Ethiopians, 2 Chron. xiv. 9, &c. Jehoshaphat against Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir, 2 Chron. xx. 12, &c.; and Hezekiah against Sennacherib, Isa. xxxvii. 36.

Also here see the misery of those that be out of covenant with God; for the Lord's power is ever against them, (unless when he will use them as a rod and scourge to punish the rebellious, as Isa. x. 5, 6.) and therefore woe unto them; as Hosea ix. 12, with Deut. xxxii. 30.

For admonition, to give all diligence to be truly in covenant with God, that so it may be with us as it was with David. For which end, in the profession of the true faith, we must imitate the golly practice of David; having a calling for that we do, trust in God, pray unto him, and walk in obedience.

Also, as we desire to scape the Lord's hand in our overthrow, let us beware of the state and properties of David's enemies.

For comfort to the golly, fighting the Lord's battles, and yet overmatched. If they be in covenant with God, and follow David, in the warrant of a good calling, in affiance, prayer, and holy obedience, they may say, Where is the God of David, of Joshua, of Jehoshaphat? &c.; as Elisha said, 'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?' 2 Kings ii. 14, for he is without shadow of change, James i. 17.

Ver. 3. *Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.*

Here the prophet returns to make mention of his courage and confidence against his enemies, more fully expressing the same than he had formerly done, by making supposal that, with all their force, and in their greatest fury, they should set upon

him, saying, 'Though an host should encamp against me'—there is the supposal of their force, and yet he would not fear; and 'though war should rise against me'—there is the supposal of their rage and fury, yet 'in this will I be confident.' But what means he by *in this*? The most take it demonstratively, with reference to that he had said, 'The Lord is my light; yet it may be taken for a relative, and referred to the war made against him, wherein he would be confident upon his having God for his light, &c.'

Here, then, we have two things to note; the one implied or taken for granted, the other expressed. The thing implied is this, that to be in fear, and to be confident, are here opposed as contrary affections of the heart. David here professeth his heart was free from fear, and that he was confident. And to clear the proposition, it containeth two things. First, That fear and confidence are contrary affections; this is acknowledged by the very heathen as a principle in natural philosophy, which none can deny that know the nature of these affections, or feel the force of them. For fear is the fainting or falling down of the heart upon the apprehension of evil, either present or imminent, as Luke xxi. 26, 'Men's hearts failing them for fear.' But confidence is the trust or persuasion of the heart to escape evil, and to enjoy good, as Ps. xxxvii. 3, 5. Secondly, That these affections are seated in the heart, is likewise acknowledged by natural men, and plain also in Scripture: for fear, see Luke xxi. 26, as before; and for confidence, Ps. xxviii. 7, 'The Lord is my strength, and my shield; my heart trusted in him.'

The reason hereof is the will of God Almighty, the maker of man's heart, as Ps. xxxiii. 15, 'He fashioneth their hearts alike;' and he made this contrary to that, Eccles. vii. 14.

The application is twofold. First, For instruction; see here that one of these two must needs possess every one of our hearts, for these affections are natural, and who will exempt himself from that which is man's natural estate? Elias was a man subject to natural passions, James v. 17, and said of himself, I am no better than my fathers, 1 Kings xix. 4.

*Quest.* Was Adam endued with fear by creation?

*Ans.* Adam's fear by creation was filial, of God; but servile fear was not in him till he sinned against God. Of this we may say, as of shame, Gen. ii. 25, 'They were both naked, the man and the woman, and were not ashamed;' with Gen. iii. 9, 10, 'The Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.'

For admonition, that every one of us do consider the causes of these afflictions; and as we desire to be freed from fear, and endued with confidence, so to give all diligence to be freed from the cause of fear, and to be possessed with the causes of true affiance and confidence. Now fear ariseth from the apprehension and conceit of that which is evil and hurtful to us; which, whatsoever it is, comes from sin, **שׁוּמֵר**, that is indeed *ἀρῆ ἢ πάλαι ἄμαρται*; see Prov. i. 33; Gen. iii. 10.

The cause of confidence and affiance is sure title to that which is good, which none have but the righteous; as Ps. xxxvii. 17, 'The Lord upholdeth the righteous.' Ver. 39, 'The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.' Hence Solomon saith, 'The righteous is bold as a lion,' Prov. xxviii. 1. Now the way to be freed from sin, is by true repentance; as Acts iii. 19, 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.' And the way to become truly righteous, is to believe in God through Christ, 'who is the end of the law for righteousness,' Rom. x. 4, which is never severed from righteousness, renewed in sanctification, as 1 Cor. i. 30. After these two graces, must we give all diligence in the use of means, the word and prayer, in and by which the Holy Ghost worketh these, and all other needful graces, in the hearts of God's elect. And for motives, consider the present evil times, in the common troubles of the church abroad, which if they befall us, without repentance and faith, we shall shrink under them. Add hereto the meditation of the terror of death to them that want repentance and faith; but most of all the horror and terror of the day of judgment.

The thing expressed is this, That David's heart was confident, and free from slavish fear of hurt, from the strongest opposition and malice of all his enemies: see Ps. iii. 6, 'I will not be afraid of ten

thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.'

The reason hereof was, his being truly in covenant with God, whereby he had title to God's power and providence for his preservation: see Ps. xvi. 9-11, 'Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee,' &c. So Ps. iii. 3, and cxviii. 6.

*Object.* David wanted this confidence before Achish, 1 Sam. xxi. 12, 13.

*Ans.* He had then the habit of faith in God in his heart, but failed somewhat in that particular act, as Peter did more when he denied his Master, Luke xxii. 60, with 32. Which we must observe, to restrain rash judgment, against ourselves or others, for particular falls. For as we have sanctification in part, and not perfectly, so we may fail in many particular acts. Which yet must not encourage any to go on in a course of sin, seeing reigning sin and saving grace cannot stand together. See Rom. vi. 1-15.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, see the great fruit of godliness, in giving courage and boldness in his greatest distress; as is said in general, 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'Godliness is profitable unto all things.' Ps. lviii. 11, 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous.'

For admonition, to labour to be such as David was, if we desire to have the like courage. Now David stood rightly in covenant with God, and kept covenant, testifying the same by new obedience: See Ps. xviii. 21-23, 'I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God,' &c. And say not, This sampler is too high; see James v. 10, 'Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an ensample of suffering affliction, and of patience;' nay, Mat. xi. 29, our Saviour himself saith, 'Learn of me;' and St Paul, Phil. ii. 5, 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' Eph. v. 1, 'Be ye followers of God, as dear children.'

Ver. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the*



*Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.*

Having in the former verse plainly expressed the singular benefits he received by having the true God for his God—as, namely, that he himself was encouraged in the greatest assaults of his enemies, ver. 1–3, and on the other side his enemies were daunted and dismayed, ver. 2—here in this verse he shews his ardent affection towards the place of God's worship, being indeed the only way for his soul to enjoy society with God, who was his light and salvation, and the strength of his life.

This affection of David towards the place of God's worship is here notably expressed three ways: first, That he makes it the only matter of his special suit unto God, which both formerly he had desired, and would yet also still seek after.—'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord;' secondly, By the length of time for which he would enjoy that benefit, namely, 'all the days of his life;' thirdly, By the comfortable ends for which he desires it, which here are these two: first, 'To behold in his beauty of the Lord;' secondly, 'To inquire in his temple.'

For the first: the Lord's house in David's time was the tabernacle of the congregation, to which he had appropriated the ordinances of divine service, for the performance whereof his people did thither assemble themselves while it stood: and to the temple built by Solomon afterward, whereto God made the promise of his presence, 1 Kings ix. 3, whither the tribes went up, Ps. cxxii. 4, unto which place David's heart was truly addicted, as Ps. xxvi. 8, 'Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth;' 1 Chron. xxix. 3, 'I have set my affection to the house of my God.' But now, in the New Testament, difference of place in respect of holiness is taken away, John iv. 21, and God's house is his church, 1 Tim. iii. 15; that is, such companies and assemblies of people as be in covenant with God, and meet together in Christ's name to perform worship and service unto God, as Mat. xviii. 20. For the godly are God's temple and God's house, 1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 5. Now, to dwell in God's house is to continue a true member of God's church,

a true believer enjoying the liberty and comfort of God's holy worship and service; wherein, though the priests and Levites had a special privilege, whose calling was to do service in the sanctuary, as Ps. cxxxiv. 1, yet it was not peculiar to them alone, as appears by Ps. xv. 1 and last, compared with Luke ii. 36, 37, where men and women that are truly godly are said to dwell in God's house.

Here, then, in this first expression of David's affection towards the house of God, note two things: first, That David's heart was set upon the house of God above all other things; he was more in prayer and endeavour after this blessing, to dwell in God's house, than after any worldly thing. This he often testifieth, as 1 Chron. xxix. 3, 'I have set mine affection to the house of my God;' Ps. xxvi. 8, 'Lord, I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth;' Ps. cxxii. 1, 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go to the house of the Lord.' So Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 2, 10, and Ps. xlii. 1, 2, 4.

This affection is the more to be marked in David, because the world wonders at it in God's children, as Cant. v. 8, 9, and derides them for it, as 2 Sam. vi. 20; therefore consider the reasons that moved him thereunto, which are indeed the wonderful, rare, heavenly blessings which are certainly enjoyed in God's house, and nowhere else. Whereof the first and principal (from which all the rest do flow) is the sure fruition of society and fellowship with the true God, who is one in essence, three in persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; who, though the whole world be his, yet only shews his special grace and favour to the true members of his church, as Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, 'He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation,' &c.; with Exod. xix. 5, 'Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.' And therefore they that are out of the church are said to be 'without Christ and without God in the world,' Eph. ii. 12, and cannot receive the Holy Ghost, who is the true sanctifier and comforter, John. xiv. 17.

Behold, then, the privilege of the church and of the true members thereof: the true God, who is one in essence, three in persons as God, is their Lord and king, which is a great ground of their true hap-

piness. The queen of Sheba accounted Solomon's servants happy in having a king so eminent for wisdom, 1 Kings x. 8; 'But, behold, a greater than Solomon is here,' Mat. xii. 42; a king and master in his church, who can give deliverance by command, Ps. xlv. 4, and will honour all his faithful servants: John xii. 26, 'Where I am, there also shall my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour;' so Luke xii. 37, 43, 44. More particularly, God the Father is in Christ their Father; 2 Cor. vi. 18; John xx. 17, even the Father of mercies, 2 Cor. i. 3, who will take notice of the wants of his children, and make supply, upon their sober and sanctified use of lawful means, if first and chiefly they seek heavenly blessings, Mat. vi. 32, 33, and what is wanting in their temporal estate he will fully make out in their eternal, Luke xii. 32. Also God the Son is in and to his church a blessed Saviour and Redeemer, he is 'the head unto his church, which is his body,' Eph. i. 22, 23, and the Saviour of his body, Eph. v. 23; see Luke ii. 10, 11; Isa. xlix. 6, 8. Yea, he is a husband unto their souls, Isa. liv. 5, 'Thy maker is thine husband;' Isa. lxii. 4, 5, 'Thy land shall be married. As a young man marieth a virgin, and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.' And God the Holy Ghost is to his church a blessed sanctifier and comforter, 'the Spirit of grace and supplications,' Zech. xii. 10; 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts,' Gal. iv. 6.

Secondly, The true God, in Christ Jesus, gives to all the true members of the church freedom and deliverance from all hurtful evils. By imputing his righteousness unto them he doth acquit them from the whole guilt and curse of sin, both original corruptions and actual transgressions, whereupon all the evils thereof, in temporal and corporal miseries, as they are curses, are removed, see Gal. iii. 13, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,' whereupon, Rom. viii. 1, 'There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus;' and more generally, Luke i. 68, &c.; Acts xiii. 39.

Thirdly, Here God affordeth to his children the full and sure fruition of all needful blessings, heavenly and earthly; see Eph. i. 3, for heavenly,

and for earthly, see Mat. vi. 32, 33. The blessings of his house are great, as Ps. lxxv. 4. Here is no lack, Ps. xxxiv. 10. See some particulars.

First, Here God gives direction in every good way; Ps. xxxii. 8, 'I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go, I will guide thee with mine eye;' Ps. lxxxiii. 24, 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel.' A type here he shewed to his people in the wilderness, Exod. xiii. 21, 22, in the pillar of cloud by day, and fire by night.

Secondly, Here is plentiful provision both for soul and body, Ps. xxxiv. 10. For the soul, see John vi. 27, 33, 35, 55, 63; 1 Cor. x. 16. Here is the tree of life, and the well of life, Rev. xxii. 1, 2; Ps. xxxvii. 9, 'With thee is the fountain of life;' Ps. lxxxvii. 7, 'All my springs are in thee,'—that is, in the true church. For the body, see Isa. lxxv. 13; Ps. xxxvii. 3, 4.

Thirdly, Here is safe protection and preservation by special providence, Ps. xci. 1, &c., implied and assured to all the faithful, Mat. x. 29–31. It is said the king's servants in ordinary cannot be arrested but by warrant from the Lord Chamberlain, and ordinary attendants on parliament-men have great freedoms; but the servants of God have more, see John xix. 11; Job i. 10; Acts xviii. 10; Ps. lxxxix. 22.

Fourthly, Here is most admirable remuneration, even in this life, with the honour of grace, and favour to be his friends, John xv. 14, 15, to be his children, 1 John iii. 1, and to have the attendance of the heavenly angels, Ps. xxxiv. 7, and xci. 11; Heb. i. 13, but most abundantly in the life to come, Mat. xix. 28, 29, and xxv. 21, 23; Luke xii. 32.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction two ways: first, See here a plain evidence of the great ignorance and unbelief of natural men in the things of God, for not one of a thousand hath David's affection to God's house; and the true cause thereof is, their ignorance and unbelief touching the good things of God's house; as in the like, see John iv. 10, and Cant. v. 9. Here, it is true, that the light that is in natural men is but mere darkness, Mat. vi. 23.

Secondly, That undoubtedly it is a wonderful privilege and prerogative to be a true member of

God's church, and to live in his house, else David would never have so much desired it.

For admonition two ways : first, To try our affection toward the house of God, by David's ; for sure it is, if God be our light and our salvation, and the strength of our life, we cannot but desire to enjoy that place where we may have society with him.

Now the evidence of this good affection is, first, Sorrow for want of liberty to God's service ; as Ps. xlii. 1, 2, 4, 'When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me,' &c. And for want of God's saving and sacred ordinances, as Ps. lxxiv. 9, 'We see not our signs ; there is no more any prophet,' &c., as Phinchas's wife in travail, 1 Sam. iv. 19-22, 'The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken,' &c.

Secondly, Joy in the means and liberty thereto, as Ps. cxxii. 1, 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.' As when the ark came to Beth-shemesh, from among the Philistines, they of Beth-shemesh rejoiced to see it, 1 Sam. vi. 13, and sacrificed sacrifices unto the Lord, ver. 15 ; 'And David danced before the ark for joy,' when it was brought to the city of David, 2 Sam. vi. 15, 16 ; and so Nahum viii. 12, 'All the people made great mirth, for understanding the word ;' and ver. 17, 'In keeping the Lord's feast there was great gladness.'

Secondly, To get David's affection to God's house, which will be had by knowing their misery that are out of it ; as the world drowned out of Noah's ark, and as is expressed, Rev. xxii. 15, with xxi. 8 ; also by their happiness that be the living members of it, see Rev. xxi. 7, and xxii. 14, for then they have God for their God, and right to all the blessings of the covenant, in freedom from the miseries of nature, (as they are curses,) and fruition of all needful good, in direction, provision, protection, and remuneration, as before is shewed.

For the sanctifying of these things considered to our hearts, we must pray for the Spirit, which quickeneth the dead, and giveth light and sight to the blind eyes of the understanding ; and with all endeavour to leave sin, and to live godly, that so we may be more capable of the blessings of the Spirit. For the Spirit of God is a holy spirit, and will not dwell in an unclean and filthy heart, as 2 Cor. v.

14, 15. Mark the place where Christ eats the pass-over with his disciples : Mark xiv. 15, It is 'a large upper room, furnished and prepared ;' so it should be with our hearts, if we would have the Father and Christ to come unto us, and make their abode with us, John xiv. 23, yea, to sup with us, Rev. iii. 20.

Secondly, In his first expressing of David's affection towards the house of God, note also the means he used, and the course he took, to obtain this blessing—namely, with earnest desire and prayer to God he joineth other endeavour, and seeketh after it by doing what he can otherwise to get this estate.

Here are two words used declaring David's behaviour to obtain this blessing, that he might dwell in the house of the Lord.

The first, שאלתי, doth plainly point out the duty of prayer to God, and that of earnest prayer, such as beggars use, who are usually importunate, as Prov. xx. 4, 'The sluggard shall beg in harvest.' The second word, אבקש, though sometime it express seeking in prayer, yet often betokens the use of other means beside prayer,<sup>1</sup> whereby the thing desired may be gotten, as labour and pains in travail and otherwise, as Ps. xxxvii. 32, 'The wicked watcheth the righteous and seeketh to slay him ;' and therefore it is sometime expounded by *pursue*, as Ps. xxxiv. 14, 'Seek peace and pursue it.'

Whereby it seems plain that David did with prayer join other endeavour to get this blessing, to dwell in the house of the Lord.

The reason of this behaviour is twofold : first, Obedience to God's ordinance, who required of those that would dwell in his house three things : first, Repentance from dead works, whereby they break off the course of all sin wherein they had formerly lived, see 1 John i. 6, 'If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie.' 'Hath the throne of wickedness fellowship with thee ?' Ps. xciv. 20, 'What fellowship hath light with darkness ?' &c., 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. David would not suffer an evil person to dwell in his house, Ps. ci. 4, 7, and shall we think that God will have his house defiled with such ? For reigning sin is spiritual leprosy ; and though he were a temporal king, yet bodily leprosy

<sup>1</sup> See Paguin, in this word.

will cause him to be cast out of the Lord's sanctuary, 2 Chron. xxvi. 20.

Secondly, To be beautified in soul with inward graces through regeneration, as faith, virtue, godliness, &c., 2 Pet. 1-8; Heb. xi. 6, 'He that cometh unto God must believe.'

Thirdly, To be adorned in life with new obedience, Ps. xv. 2, 3, &c., and xxiv. 3, 4. And these things David must seek after if he would dwell in God's house; and so no doubt he did.

Secondly, Desire to enjoy the blessings of God's house, wherein he knew that man's true happiness did stand, as Ps. lxxv. 4, and lxxxiv. 4; as Paul did, Phil. iii. 13, 14. Now in nature everything desires the happiness of its kind, so far forth as the enlightening of the understanding can direct, which, being most perfect in God's children, they desire the fruition of the true God, who is the fountain of the best happiness.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction it shews us plainly whence it is that the greatest number in the world do fail of true spiritual grace, and so indeed of salvation itself: sure it is not for want of desire, for wicked Balaam would have his soul to die the death of the righteous, Num. xxiii. 10, but it is because with desire in prayer they do not join seeking after, and holy endeavour in the diligent use of other means ordained of God for the attaining hereof. For it fares with men that live in the church for the blessings of grace and salvation, as it doth with men in the world for temporal blessings, of whom Solomon saith, Prov. xiii. 4, 'The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing.' Why so? Because he is a sluggard, and severeth diligence from desire, as the opposition shews in the end of the verse,—but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat; but the idle soul shall suffer hunger, Prov. xix. 15. And so it is for spiritual graces, which are the treasures of wisdom, heavenly riches, as Christ implieth, John v. 40, 'You will not come unto me that you might have life,' compared with Mat. xi. 28, 29, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour,' &c. And St Paul shews it, Acts xiii. 46, 47, 'Seeing you put it from you,' &c.; and Luke x. 10-12, 'Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city,

which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you,' &c. And it may be seen in the foolish virgins, Mat. xxv. 3, 11, 12, and in the idle servant, Mat. xxv. 25, &c.

For admonition, all that desire to have grace and glory must here learn of David, with desire in prayer to join diligence in the use of further means ordained of God for the obtaining of those blessings: see Prov. ii. 3, 4, 'If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord,' &c. There we see seeking goes with crying; so Mat. vii. 7, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find,' &c. The very heathen would say that fortune resisted sluggish prayers. And see James iv. 3, 'Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss,' not joining endeavour with prayer. Consider 2 Pet. i. 5-10, 'Give all diligence; add to your faith virtue,' &c.; add 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12, 14; and see answerable hereunto the endeavour of the godly; of St Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27; Phil. iii. 10-13; and of the church of the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. i. 6-8; and of Ephesus, Rev. ii. 2; and of Thyatira, Rev. ii. 19.

The second thing here expressing David's sincere affection to the house of God is the length of time for which he desires to dwell therein, namely, all the days of his life. No shorter time will satisfy David's soul; while he lives in the world he would dwell in the house of the Lord, and therefore in the thought and assurance thereof doth he so much encourage himself: Ps. xxiii. 6, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'

The reason hereof is threefold. First, For the fruition of the good things of God's house, mentioned before, viz., spiritual society with God, and from him deliverance from all hurtful evils, and partaking of all needful blessings, in direction, provision, protection, and remuneration, to which these mentioned in this verse do belong, 'to behold the beauty of the Lord,' &c., whereupon he esteemed 'a day in God's courts better than a thousand elsewhere,' Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

Secondly, For his better opportunity to glorify

God, which thing his soul desired to do so long as he lived, as Ps. lxxiii. 4, 'Thus will I bless thee while I live;' Ps. cxlvi. 2, 'While I live will I praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have any being.' Now the house of God was the chiefest place for this duty: Ps. xxix. 9, 'In his temple doth every one speak of his glory;' Ps. lxxxiv. 4, 'Blessed are they that dwell in thine house, they will be still praising thee.'

Thirdly, He knew that to be out of God's house was to be out of God's favour, as Cain's complaint doth plainly import, Gen. iv. 14, and the Lord's severe dealing against Israel for their sins doth plainly shew, 2 Kings xvii. 18, 20.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, see plainly in David that the hearts of the godly do sincerely desire, and in their lives they do faithfully strive for perseverance in the state of grace: for that thing at this day is dwelling in God's house, as the phrase imports, 1 John ii. 19, 'They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us,—that is, in the profession and obedience of the word of faith. Which is a thing worthy of our observation, for our better satisfaction touching the truth of our doctrine, of the perseverance of the saints in grace; thereof we need to have the less doubt, seeing in them all is wrought a true desire after this estate, which they shew by prayer and other godly endeavour. Now the Lord heareth the desires of those that fear him, Ps. cxlv. 19, and Mat. vii. 7, 'Ask and it shall be given you.'

For admonition, to those that are weary of God's house and the exercises of religion, snuffing at them, and saying it is a weariness, Mal. i. 13; saying, 'When will the Sabbath be gone?' Amos viii. 5. How many have we that love the alehouse and whorehouse better than God's house, as Jer. v. 7, 'They assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses.' But, Lam. i. 4, 'The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come unto the solemn feasts.'

*Quest.* How should they alter their estate and do better?

*Ans.* 'The way of man is not in himself,' Jer. x. 23; yet the means ordained of God must be used of

every one that would become like unto David, which is diligence in the word and prayer, and making conscience to live according to the word.

The third thing here to be noted in David's expressing the fervent affection of his heart towards God's house, are the blessed ends for which David desires that favour,—namely, first, 'To behold the beauty of the Lord;,' secondly, 'To inquire in his temple.'

For the first, the Lord's beauty, to be seen in his house, is not the beauty of his essence, for so no man can see God and live, Exod. xxxiii. 18, 20; before this glorious beauty the angels cover their faces with their wings, Isa. vi. 1, 2; but it is the beauty of his ordinances, wherein God doth reveal to the eyes of men's minds, enlightened by his Spirit, the pleasant beauty of his goodness, justice, love, and mercy in Jesus Christ. Mark here, then,

That in God's house the godly do behold the pleasant beauty of the Lord, in his gracious properties of goodness, justice, love, and mercy in Jesus Christ. Ps. lxxiii. 1, 2, 'My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' See 2 Cor. iii. 18, and iv. 6.

The reason hereof is, the good pleasure of God thus to manifest his gracious properties in his own ordinances. Look, as in the works of the creation, he shewed the eternal power and wisdom of the Godhead, Rom. i. 19, 20, so, in the ordinances of his service, he doth make known his justice, goodness, love, and mercy in Jesus Christ. This is most clear in the gospel preached, and in the evangelical sacraments rightly administered; wherein, 'with open face, we behold the glory of the Lord, and are transformed into the same image,' 2 Cor. iii. 18. 'The world by wisdom knew not God, in the wisdom of God,—that is, how God will shew himself wise in man's salvation, 1 Cor. i. 24. Now, Christ crucified in the gospel preached is this power of God, and this wisdom of God, ver. 24. 'Herein is made known the unsearchable riches of Christ,' Eph. iii. 8, and 'the manifold wisdom of God,' ver. 10. 'For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,' Col. i. 19. 'In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,' Col. ii. 3, and are all opened unto us in the evangelical ministry. Now

the legal service had 'the shadow of all these good things to come,' Col. ii. 17; Heb. x. 1. For the sacrifices did lead to Christ, as 1 Cor. v. 7; and the purifying water shadowed out the sanctification of the Spirit, John iii. 5. These and the rest of the legal ordinances were figures for the time of the law, Heb. ix. 9; and the words of the prophets, with them, were lights that shined in a dark place, till the day of the gospel did dawn, and the day star—that is, the clearer light of knowledge—arise in men's hearts, 2 Pet. i. 19. Now, David had the Spirit in prophetic wisdom, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, and thereby saw, even in these legal ordinances, the pleasant beauty of the Lord his God in Christ Jesus.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, see a reason of the different affections to be seen in men toward the house of God, and the sacred ordinances therein used. Some are exceeding zealous thereof, as Ps. lxxix. 9; longing and fainting for the courts of the Lord, Ps. lxxxiv. 2, lxxiii. 1, 2, and xlii. 1, 2. Others count it a weariness, and wonder that any should take delight therein. Now the reason is, that some see the beauty of the Lord in his house, and others are blind and ignorant, and see nothing at all, as Cant. v. 9; being like the prophet's servant, that saw the horses and chariots of the enemy, but saw not the chariots of fire from the Lord till the prophet had prayed for him, 2 Kings vi. 15–17. They are like the woman of Sychar, that asked not the water of life of Christ, because she knew him not, nor the gift of God, John iv. 10.

For admonition, it serves two ways. First, To natural men, to give all diligence after spiritual illumination, that they may attain to this estate—to see the Lord's pleasing beauty in his sacred ordinances. The way is to get the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12; for which end we must use God's means, the word preached, Acts x. 44; Gal. iii. 2; and prayer, Luke xi. 13, in a holy manner,—that is, first, Repenting of sin, Prov. i. 23; Acts ii. 38; secondly, Hungering and thirsting after grace, Isa. xlv. 3; thirdly, Walking in new obedience, Acts v. 32.

Secondly, To God's children, to be careful of their behaviour, that the beauty of the Lord may be still shining upon them. The way is, first, To watch

against temptation to sin, which is a cloud to hide God's face from his people, as Lam. iii. 44; Isa. lix. 2. Secondly, To be frequent and diligent in those sacred ordinances and religious services wherein God begets and increaseth grace in their hearts: which now are, the solemn parts of the evangelical ministry, in the word preached, sacraments reverently administered, and prayer with thanksgiving. Thirdly, To strive to shew the power of godliness in conscionable obedience: John xiv. 21, 23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him. If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him;' and Ps. l. 23, 'To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.'

The second end for which David desires to dwell in God's house is, that he may 'inquire in his temple,' that is, diligently seek direction of God in all cases of doubt or difficulty that may any way concern him. Mark here, then.

That in God's house the godly did inquire and seek of God for direction and satisfaction in all material cases of doubt and difficulty that did concern them. See, for David himself, 1 Sam. xxii. 10; Doeg tells Saul that Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for David; and, ver. 15, Ahimelech's speech seems to imply that he had done it often: 'Did I then begin to inquire of God for him?' as if he should have said, that is a thing I have formerly done oftentimes for him. So chap. xxiii. 2, David inquired of the Lord about his going to fight against the Philistines that came against Keilah: ver. 4, 'Again he inquired of the Lord.' This inquiry was thought to have been by the prophet Gad, who was with David, 1 Sam. xxii. 5, and xxiii. 9, 10; he inquired by Abiathar the priest, that was fled to him with the ephod, as ver. 6; and chap. xxx. 7, 8, he inquired of the Lord about the pursuit of the Amalekites that had burnt Ziklag. So before this time, Judges i. 1, the people asked the Lord, 'Who shall go up against the Canaanites?' and Judges xx. 18, they ask counsel of the Lord about going up against the Benjamites, and ver. 23, the second time, and ver.

27, 28, the third time, where the manner is shewed. Add Gen. xxv. 22.

The reason hereof is twofold: first, God's own ordinance, which is plainly set down, directing his people to this duty; see the promise of God's presence to give direction, Exod. xxv. 21, 22, whence the most holy place is thought to be called רבֿרֿבֿרֿ, because thence God spake and gave answer, when he was rightly sought unto, 1 Kings vi. 19, &c. And hereupon, Num. xxvii. 21, Joshua must be before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him before the Lord. Add Deut. xvii. 8, 9.

Secondly, For the fruition of the benefits and comforts of this privilege, which are exceeding great: first, Freedom from manifold evils, that do accompany men's miscarriages, that walk in their own counsels, and after their own conceits, as we may see in the Israelites making league with the Gibeonites, that were inhabitants in the land of Canaan, Josh. ix. 14, &c. Secondly, Assurance to be acceptable to God, and blessed of him in the things they take in hand, even of this world: see 2 Chron. xv. 2, 'If ye seek him he will be found of you;' and ver. 15, 'They sought him with their whole desire, and he was found of them.' Thirdly, Undoubted fruition of glory in the life to come: see Ps. lxxiii. 24, 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.' See also Ps. xxiv. 3-6, 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, &c. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.'

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, see plainly that the true members of God's church are advanced in privilege, dignity, and honour, above all other people; for with whom doth the Lord so deal in grace and favour as with the true members of the church? 'What nation is so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as our God is in all things that we call upon him for?' Deut. iv. 7; he bids, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me,' Ps. l. 15; 'The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry,' Ps. xxxiv. 15; 'The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit,' ver. 18.

*Object.* If any one say, This indeed was the pre-rogative

of the Jews, that they were God's peculiar people and chief treasure, and the Lord would be inquired of by them above all other people; but is it so with the church of the New Testament?

*Ans.* Though there may be some difference in the manner of God's giving answer, yet for substance and real performance the church of the New Testament is preferred before the Jews, as we shall see in taking particular view of their means of inquiry of God in cases of difficulty, which were especially four.

First, By prophets, as 2 Kings iii. 11, 'Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?' and 1 Kings xxii. 7. Secondly, By the high priest, as Num. xxvii. 1. Thirdly, By the ordinary teachers of the law, Mal. ii. 7. Fourthly, In prayer, Ps. l. 15, wherewith was joined fasting, when they sought of God blessings of importance this way, as Ezra viii. 21, 23. Now, the church of the New Testament at this day is not inferior to the church of the Jews, for they sometime wanted extraordinary prophets, as Ps. lxxiv. 9. And we do ever enjoy the spiritual presence of Christ Jesus, the great prophet of the church, Mat. xxviii. 20. For John Baptist was 'more than a prophet,' Mat. xi. 9, and yet not worthy to unloose Christ's shoelatchet, John i. 27. He is likewise the great high priest of our profession, who, by his word and Spirit in all needful truth, revealeth his Father's will more plainly and fully than the high priest did by Urim and Thummim, see Heb. i. 2, with iv. 14, 'We have a great high priest over the house of God;' chap. viii. 2, 'A minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle.' And for the written word, wherewith God's will is to be found, the great increase of the sacred canon, by all the books of the New Testament, shews our prerogative that way above the Jews. And for access and obtaining by prayer with fasting, direction from the Lord, see the promise, Luke xi. 9-13, with John xvi. 24, 26; and behold the success by instance in Cornelius, Acts x. 2, 3, 30, &c.

For admonition, it serves effectually to move every one that lives in the church to look unto their state and carriage, that it be such as may give them some good assurance that they have right to this privilege to inquire in the temple. To this end we

must look to two things: first, That we be in covenant with God, else we have no right to this prerogative, as Eph. ii. 12; the promise of audience is made to God's people, 2 Chr. vii. 14. Secondly, That we keep covenant, living in conscionable obedience, as Ps. xxv. 9, 10, else we forfeit our right, as we may see by God's dealing with Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 16, and Ezek. ii. 3, 30, 31. But if we keep covenant we may claim our due of God, as David doth in this 27th Psalm, ver. 7, 9, always remembering that we walk in the Lord's highway, to consult with him in his word, as Ps. lxxiii. 17, for therein God teacheth his children, as Ps. xciv. 10, 12, and cxix. 98, 99; and to call upon him by prayer, adding thereto the humiliation of our souls by fasting, as Ezra viii. 21, 23, with Acts x. 2, 3, 30, &c.

Ver. 5. *For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*

A reason of David's earnest desire to dwell in God's house for ever, drawn from the benefit of safety and security there to be found in time of trouble; which benefit is here expressed under a double action of God: first, *Hiding in his pavilion, and secret of his tabernacle*; secondly, *Setting up upon a rock*. For the better conceiving whereof we must know, that by God's pavilion David means the Lord's tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion. And the secret of his tabernacle was the most holy place, where the cherubims spread their wings over the mercy seat, the cover of the ark of the covenant; whither indeed David might not go personally, as we may see by Heb. ix. 8, and Lev. xvi. 2, but aimeth at that which those things did shadow out, namely, special providence, and protection for safety, as Ps. xci. 1, 4, and lxi. 3, 4. Those places indeed were generally taken for places of safety, as may appear by the fact of Adonijah, 1 Kings i. 50, 51, and of Joab, 1 Kings ii. 28, and by the charge of Jehoiadab the high priest, 2 Kings xi. 15. The ground whereof is thought to be (besides reverence of God's presence) God's ordinance in the wilderness, that the tabernacle of the congregation should be a sanctuary for that time, as the cities of refuge were afterward, as is gathered by Exod. xxi. 13, 14.

So that here David assures himself that, being a true member of God's church, his grace and favour, power and providence, should be as the Lord's pavilion, and as the secret place of his tabernacle, even a sure and safe place of safety and security to him. And likewise as a rock, that is high and strong, doth give safety and security to him that is set thereon, from the violent assault of all malicious enemies, so the Lord's power and favour would become the means of safety unto David; who thereupon doth usually call the Lord his rock and his salvation, as Ps. xviii. 2, and xlii. 9.

In this reason thus conceived, note two things; the first implied, touching his state, liable and subject to manifold evils and troubles; the second expressed and intended, touching the means of his preservation and safety from the foresaid evils.

For the first, mark here that David makes account, that while he lives here on earth he is liable and subject to manifold evils, to sore and great troubles; Ps. xl. 12, 'Innumerable evils have compassed me.' Ps. lxxviii. 3, 'My soul is full of troubles.'

The reason or ground hereof is fourfold. First, God's divine sovereignty, whereby he may do with his own what he will, and dispose of his dearest children to endure both sorrow and great affliction; as he dealt with Job, chap. ii. 3, &c., wherein our Saviour instructeth Peter, John xxi. 18, 22, which it seems David had learned concerning himself; Ps. xxxix. 9, 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.'

Secondly, Because of iniquity; for sin is truly that *שׁוּמַת*, *šumath*, *Ate*, which brings all evil; affliction follows sinners. And here, first, David's own sins make him liable to evils of affliction; he complains that his iniquities took hold of him; and so he felt, 2 Sam. xii. 10. Likewise, the sins of the wicked in his time might make it to go far worse with him; as Elijah told Ahab, 'Thou and thy father's house trouble Israel,' 1 Kings xviii. 18, and so we may think it was in the time of the church's complaint, Ps. xlv. 9, 10, 17-19.

Thirdly, Satan's malice; who cast out floods against the woman, Rev. xii. 15, and prevails with God for leave to afflict holy Job with grievous plagues, Job i. 10, 11, and ii. 5, and let not David



escape, 1 Chron. xxi. 1; being indeed that 'roaring lion, going about seeking whom he may devour,' 1 Pet. v. 8.

Fourthly, The malice of the wicked, who are the seed of the serpent: who hated and persecuted David, not for his offence or sin, as Ps. lix. 3, 4, but because he followed goodness, as Ps. xxxviii. 19, 20. Like to Cain, who slew his brother Abel, 'because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous,' 1 John iii. 12, whereof Christ forewarned his disciples, John xv. 19, 20.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, see from David's resolution what is the case and condition of all the godly,—namely, to be subject to evils and troubles, which David made account of; for all the forenamed reasons fasten themselves upon the godly now living, as they did upon David. And for plain testimony, see Ps. xxxiv. 19, 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous;' 2 Tim. iii. 12, 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' For instance, see Jacob's confession of himself, Gen. xlvii. 9, 'Few and evil have the days of my life been,' and the state of Job, chap. i. and ii., and that of Moses; Ps. xc. 15, also Heb. xi. 37, 38, 'They whom the world was not worthy of' were 'most miserable' for outward things, as Paul confesseth for all the godly, 1 Cor. xv. 19.

For admonition, two ways: first, To the wicked of the world, to beware of self-deceit, in promising to themselves continued happiness and freedom from evils, because for the present they enjoy peace and prosperity. That this is their thought and course, see Ps. x. 6, 'He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved, for I shall never be in adversity:' also Isa. xxviii. 15, they say, 'We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are at agreement: when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us.' But consider what God saith, ver. 18, 'Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand,' &c. Be not therefore deceived in a matter of such importance. Judgments unlooked for will light and lie the more heavy. Consider how the Holy Ghost reasoneth, 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18, 'Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that

obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?' So Jer. xxv. 29, 'Lo, I begin to bring evil on the city that is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished?' Luke xxiii. 31, 'If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' Mat. x. 24, 25, 'The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?'

Secondly, To the godly, to bethink themselves with David that troubles may come; the days in which they live may be full of evils, and thereupon to prepare for it and to glorify God under afflictions, if it please God to send them. For the satisfying of the heart of every man's subjection to troubles, consider the forenamed reasons from God's sovereignty, from sin, from the devil, and the wicked of the world, that are the instruments of Satan, where-to, if none can answer otherwise than by acknowledgment of subjection, then will true wisdom say, It is best to prepare for it, that we may glorify God under the cross. The way of preparation is this:

First, To make sure we be rightly in covenant with God, which is undoubted to the true professors of God's holy religion maintained amongst us, wherein we avouch the true God for our God, and he avoucheth us for his people, as Deut. xxvi. 17, 18, with chap. xxix. 10–13, whereof baptism is a true sacramental sign and seal, as circumcision was to the Jews, Rom. iv. 11. But he that would be assured thereof must make conscience to perform the vow of moral obedience, made in baptism, of forsaking sin, believing in God, and walking in new obedience.

Secondly, To get the grace of faith in Christ, whereby we rest and rely upon him for all the blessings of the covenant. This grace enables the just to live even in affliction, as Heb. x. 38, whereupon Paul said he was 'able to do all things through Christ that strengthened him,' as to want, and to abound, to be full, and to be empty, Phil. iv. 11, 12.

Thirdly, To redeem the time by labouring to profit, according to the means of grace afforded unto us, Eph. v. 16.

Fourthly, To become merciful to those that be in misery, so shall we lay up in store a good foundation for mercy to ourselves, Ps. xli. 1, &c.; Mat. v. 7; James ii. 13.

Then, when affliction is come, we must set faith a-work by looking at God's hand therein, as Christ teacheth, Mat. x. 28, 29, which is the only ground of true patience, as Ps. xxxix. 9; also consider what good it pleaseth God to raise up to his children by afflictions, as Ps. xciv. 12, cxix. 67, 71; add 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

The second thing to be noted here is purposely intended; that when God shall grant to David to dwell in his house, he doth assure himself of special safety and protection in times of trouble, for that he means by hiding in his pavilion, and in the secret of his tabernacle, and setting up upon a rock, as we heard before, see Ps. lxi. 3, 4, 6, 7, 'Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever; I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Thou wilt prolong the king's life; and his years as many generations. He shall abide before God for ever; O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.'

The ground of this assurance was God's own testimony, for the continuance of his presence in his sanctuary, and for the exercise of his power and providence for their safety that be true members of his church, see Ps. xlvi. 5-7, 'God is in the midst of her, (i.e., his church), she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge.' Ps. xlviii. 3, 8, 12-14, 'God is known in her palaces for a refuge. As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God; God will establish it for ever. Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.' See Isa. xxxiii. 20-22, 'Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad

rivers and streams. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us.' Isa. xxxvii. 35, 'I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake,'—that is, for my promise sake to David in Christ, as Ps. cxxxii. 11, 13, 14, 17, 'The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne, &c. There will I make the horn of David to bud.' Now David he continued a true member of God's house, being careful to keep in covenant with God, as he both professed in word and testified by godly behaviour, upon which he grounds his assurance of God's especial protection. His profession of being in covenant, see Ps. cxvi. 16, 'O Lord, truly I am thy servant. I am thy servant;' Ps. xxiii. 1, 4, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none evil.' His godly behaviour, whercon he grounds his assurance of God's special protection, is threefold.

First, He puts his trust and hope in God, as Ps. xxi. 7, 'For the king trusteth in the Lord, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved;' Ps. xi. 1, 'In thee, O Lord, put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Fly as a bird to your mountain?' Ps. xvi. 1, 'Preserve me, O God, for in thee do I put my trust:' Ps. lxxxvi. 2, 'Oh thou, my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.'

Secondly, He testified his trust in God by prayer: Ps. vii. 1, 'O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me;' Ps. cxvi. 3, 4, 'The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.'

Thirdly, He made conscience of a godly and upright life, and thereon grounds his assurance of special protection: Ps. iv. 3, 'Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call upon him.' Ps. xviii. 17, 20, 'He delivered me from my strong enemy. The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness,' &c. Ver. 21-23, 'For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before

me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity,' &c. Ps. xli. 2. 'Thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.'

This serves for instruction, and for admonition, and for comfort.

For instruction, see here with David the true and right way of safety in time of trouble. Get to dwell in God's house, and then God's special providence shall be over us, as the former testimonies do plentifully testify.

But here a doubt ariseth, Where we shall find this house, and how to get a place therein?

*Ans.* In the days of grace and times of the New Testament, 'the tabernacle of God is with men, and he dwells with them; they are his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God,' Rev. xxi. 3.

But is this common to all, as they are men, or is there some special work of God required in them and among them that be his house?

*Ans.* John vi. 44, 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him;' that is, give him grace so to do from above, ver. 65. 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy,' Rom. ix. 16. Those that believe on his name are 'born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,' John i. 13. 'For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure,' Phil. ii. 13.

But what hath man then to do, since our conversion and regeneration is God's work?

*Ans.* It is indeed God's work, yet in the use of outward means which he gives to reasonable creatures, that therein they may wait for and receive God's work of grace in a holy calling, which, both amongst Jews and Gentiles, doth distinguish the elect from the reprobate, as Acts ii. 39. Now this calling is in the gospel preached, sanctified by prayer, 2 Thes. xiii. 14, and therein are men made God's house, Heb. iii. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 5; 1 Cor. iii. 16.

But may every man in the use of the gospel preached attain to this calling?

*Ans.* For aught that either minister or people do know to the contrary, every one may be called that lives under the gospel; the fault is their own

if they be not, as Christ saith, 'Light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil,' John iii. 19. For men undoubtedly do first rebel against the word, and refuse God's mercy offered in the means of grace, before that God withdraw his grace or take away from them the use of the means. In regard whereof Christ complains of the Jews, that when he would have gathered them they would not, Mat. xxiii. 37. For though the best employment and improvement of nature be insufficient to get the true habit of grace, without the work of the Spirit, as Rom. ix. 16, yet sure it is men are first wanting to themselves in the use of means, before the blessing of the Spirit be denied unto them. Their own hearts can tell them they have failed in turning from sin, as Prov. i. 23, in hungering after grace, Isa. xlv. 3, and in doing the good they know, Acts v. 32.

For admonition, as we desire safety and shelter in time of trouble, so we must with David strive and endeavour after a sure place in God's house, become true members of God's church.

The way is, first, To leave and break off the course of all known sin, for that prevents society with God, as 2 Cor. xiv. 15, 16, and thereupon the exhortation is unto repentance, chap. vii. 1; secondly, To labour for true faith in Christ, for that joins us unto Christ, to make us living stones to be built up a spiritual house, as 1 Pet. ii. 4-7; for, Eph. iii. 17, 'Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith;' thirdly, to walk in new obedience, performing every good duty which the Lord requireth, as Isa. lvi. 3-7, 'Let not the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and daughters,' &c.

For comfort, this makes greatly to all true believers in times of trouble; for certainly they have right and title to this immunity of God's house. Indeed, outward peace, ease, and plenty are but temporal blessings, and the promise thereof must be understood with the exception of the cross, so as God, for

trial of grace and correction for sin, may exercise them in afflictions, as he did Job and David; yet this is their comfort therein: first, That God will not fail them nor forsake them, Heb. xiii. 5, 6, and therefore they may boldly say. The Lord is mine helper; I will not fear what man shall do unto me; as Ps. xci. 15, 'He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will deliver him in trouble; and I will be with him and honour him.' Secondly, That God will cause their troubles to work for their good, as Rom. viii. 28; Heb. xii. 10. Thirdly, God will give an issue with the trial, that they may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. x. 13.

Ver. 6. *And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy: I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.*

In the beginning of this verse the prophet adds another reason of his earnest desire to dwell in God's house, expressed, ver. 4, drawn from the benefit of honour and dignity whereto God would now shortly advance him and lift up his head above his enemies round about him, whereupon he solemnly professeth that he would glorify God with the sacrifices of joy, and sing praises unto God. Here, then, we have two things to handle: first, David's prediction of his dignity and honour; secondly, His solemn profession of his thankful behaviour. The prediction of his honour is, in the first part of the verse, set out metaphorically and comparatively, and amplified by the circumstance of time when it shall be. Metaphorically thus, *my head shall be lifted up*; that is, I shall be advanced in dignity and honour, and so to cheerful and comfortable estate; for men dejected and humbled hang down the head; when, therefore, they are advanced and cheered, then are they said to have their head lifted up, as Gen. xl. 17, 'Pharaoh shall lift up thine head and restore thee to thy place.' Jer. lii. 31, 32, 'Evil-merodach king of Babylon lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison, and spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon.' Comparatively he saith, his head shall be lifted up above his enemies round about him. And the time when it shall be is *now*, the time present, which makes it

the more comfortable. As if he should have said, Though I have been long and much dejected, yet now shall I be advanced and cheered above mine enemies round about me.

In this prediction of his honour and comfort note these things: first, Implied and taken for granted respecting David's dangerous estate, he had enemies round about him. Ps. iii. 1, 2, 'Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, there is no help for him in God.' Ps. lxxix. 4, 'They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty.' Ps. cxviii. 10-12, 'All nations compassed me about: they compassed me about like bees;' and Ps. lvi. 2, 'Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me.'

The reason hereof is fourfold: first, In God disposing of David to be a type of Christ, even in his troubles and opposition in the world, wherewith God was pleased to have them exercised; as is plain, Ps. ii. 1, &c., and xxii. 12, 16, 'Many bulls have compassed me: dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me;' and Ps. lxxi. 20, 'Thou hast shewed me great and sore troubles.' For Christ, see Isa. liiii. 10.

Secondly, In God's favour, advancing him to dignity and honour, Ps. iv. 2; and lxii. 4, which was fully verified in Daniel, chap. vi. 3, 4.

Thirdly, In David sometime provoking the Lord by his sin, as 2 Sam. xii. 9-11, 'Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord; therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; I will raise up evil against thee out of thine house.' See Ps. iii. 1, 2, with 2 Sam. xv. 13, &c.

Fourthly, In David's enemies, that were the seed of the serpent, and hated him for his goodness: Ps. xxxvii. 19, 20, 'They that hate me wrongfully are multiplied. They also that render evil for good, are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is.'

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, see in David the state of the godly; they are liable to be compassed about with enemies: for that which befell David, as the type, and Christ Jesus himself, the truth, typified by

David, may befall any servant of God in this world: as Christ reasoned, Luke xxiii. 31, 'If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' Mat. x. 25, 'If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?'

For admonition, to beware of rash judgment, as well against others, when they are compassed about with adversaries, as also against ourselves, when that evil doth befall us. Corrupt nature measures God's love by outward things: and therefore thinks with the wicked, that when troubles increase, God forsaketh, Ps. lxxi. 12. 'But God's ways are not as man's ways,' Isa. lv. 8. 'As many as he loves, he rebukes and chastens,' Rev. iii. 19; 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.' And he useth the rods of men to correct his children: as 2 Sam. vii. 14; Ps. lxxxix. 31, 32.

For comfort, this makes greatly in opposition by many and mighty in the world: for in David we may see that no strange thing befalling us, but such as appertaineth to man, and God will give the issue, as 1 Cor. x. 13. Let us say, the servant is not above his Lord, Mat. x. 24, 25. Consider that if their opposition be for a good cause, we have great cause to rejoice: for we are made conformable to Christ, and have fellowship with him in afflictions. See 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13; 2 Cor. i. 7.

The thing here expressed by David is this, that God will now restore him to comfort, and advance him to honour; where we may note two things—first, That David knew that the time of comfort and honour was at hand: for he saith, '*Now* shall my head be lifted up.'

This he might do by special instinct, being a prophet, for the Spirit of God spake in him, and by him; 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2.

It serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, see what God is able to do for his children; he can not only bestow joy and honour, but acquaint them with the particular time when they shall receive it. So God revealed to Moses the delivery of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, Exod. iii. 7, 8, and chap. xi. 1.

For admonition, to labour to be followers of David, for upright hearts and obedient lives, as Ps. xviii.,

in the title he is styled the servant of the Lord; and ver. 21, he saith, 'I have kept the ways of the Lord, I was upright also before him;' and unto such it is that God reveals his secrets, Ps. xxv. 14; Prov. iii. 32.

Secondly, Here note the phrase in which David expresseth his assurance of honour and comfort: 'My head shall be lifted up,' wherein he plainly makes himself a patient, ascribing both honour and comfort unto God. Ps. xxiii. 1, &c., 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not lack; he maketh me lie down in green pastures; he restoreth my soul,' &c., to the end. Ps. xviii. 48, 'Thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me;' ver. 35, 'Thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.' See Ps. cxxi. 1, 2, with 1 Sam. xviii. 23.

He knew God's calling would be the best shelter against envy and opposition, from which high places are seldom free; as Jeremiah in his calling doth comfort himself, Jer. xvii. 16, 'As for me, I have not lusted from being a pastor to follow thee.' And so David comforts himself against Eliab's reproach, for making offer to encounter with Goliath, 1 Sam. xvii. 29.

This serves, first, for the reproof of the ambitious, that by any sinister means will seek advancement—a common sin in all ages, and a great evil in our times, moving many to oppression, bribery, and sundry other ungodly courses.

For admonition, to be followers of David, in receiving honour and dignity: walk uprightly in our places, till God advance us; be sure of his calling before we stir, lest in time of trouble our consciences say unto us, *How earnest thou hither?* See the danger of usurpation in the Jewish exorcists, Acts xix. 13, 16.

*Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.*

Here David professeth his thankful behaviour toward God for the honour and comfort which God would shortly vouchsafe unto him; and it stands in the cheerful performance of such religious service for thanksgiving, as God required at the hands of his people when he bestowed his blessings upon them. Hereof he mentioneth these two: first, Real sacrifices of joy, whereby he meaneth sacrifices of thanksgiving, over which the priests sounded an

alarm with their silver trumpets, Num. x. 10, called 'the joyful sound.' Ps. lxxxix. 15. And this duty he amplifieth by the circumstance of the place where he would perform it—namely, in God's tabernacle, the place appointed for that solemn part of God's service. Deut. xii. 11–14, 'There shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there: thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt-offerings and your sacrifices,' &c. Secondly, Singing praises unto God: which duty he promiseth with repetition or gemination, to testify his more certain resolution for the performance of it, saying, 'I will sing, yea, I will sing praises.'

In this profession of thankful behaviour, note two things: first, The duty he will perform; secondly, The place where.

For the first, note, When David receiveth from God honour and comfort, then will he offer unto God sacrifices of thanksgiving, with joy and rejoicing; his sacrifices shall be sacrifices of joy, and when he offers them, he will sing praises unto God.

The like he shewed at the fetching home of the ark of the covenant towards the city of David, 1 Chron. xiii. 8, and xv. 16. David spake to the chief of the Levites, to appoint their brethren to be singers, with instruments of music, psalteries, and harps, and cymbals, sounding by lifting up the voice with joy; and upon his deliverance from the hand of Saul, and other enemies, Ps. xviii. 1, &c., and exvi. 12, 13.

The reasons hereof are great, as well in regard of God, and of himself, as also his brethren. In regard of God, first, Because he commands it, Ps. c. 1, and obedience is acceptable, 1 Sam. xv. 22; Ps. lxix. 30, 31. Secondly, It is for his glory; Ps. l. 23, 'Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me.'

In respect of himself, first, It is pleasant and comely, Ps. xxxiii. 1, and exlvii. 1. Secondly, It is good and profitable, for them that honour God will he honour, 1 Sam. ii. 30. Hence the Samaritan leper, returning to praise Christ for his cleansing, received an assurance of a heavenly and spiritual cleansing, Luke xvii. 15, 19.

Thirdly, The omitting of it is dangerous to provoke God's wrath, being at least a shameful neglect of God's mercy. See 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 26.

In respect of others, to whom David desired to do good, Ps. xxxiv. 11, and li. 13. His zeal for God's glory would provoke many, as Ps. xxxiv. 2, 3, 'My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.' And, if his example could not move them, yet it would leave them without excuse, under the censure and punishment of ingratitude; as Job's friends were, Job xlii. 7. For it is a dangerous thing to neglect good example, as Jer. xxii. 15, 17, 'Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness. Therefore thus saith the Lord,' &c.

This serves for instruction, reprehension, and admonition.

The instruction is, from David's example to all God's people, to shew them fitting behaviour towards God when they receive blessings and benefits from him,—namely, to be thankful unto God in praises and songs, and that with joyfulness and gladness.

For reproof, it makes justly against all those that are unthankful for God's blessings, and likewise dull and heavy-hearted in God's praises: see Deut. xxxiii. 47, 48, '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,' &c., with Deut. xxxii. 6, 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise!'

For admonition, that every child of God be a follower of David, both for the duty itself, and for the manner of performing it, with cheerfulness and gladness. Consider, that David studied the art of thankfulness, Ps. cxvi. 12, 13, and that upon weighty grounds—respecting God, respecting himself and his brethren; all which we should meditate on, to stir us up to the cheerful performance of this duty of thankfulness.

The second point to be observed in David's profession of thankful behaviour is, the circumstance of place where he will offer his sacrifices—namely, in God's tabernacle.

David will offer his sacrifices in God's tabernacle; so 2 Sam. vi. 17, David set the ark in his place, in

the midst of the tabernacle, that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord; meaning by the hands of the priests, as 1 Chron. xvi. 1.

This he observed, first, That he might have acceptance before the Lord in this service; for in observing this circumstance of place, he obeyed God's ordinance, Deut. xii. 11-14, and so had title to the favour of acceptance, as Isa. lvi. 7.

Secondly, David knew there was danger in transgressing God's ordinance, as 1 Chron. xv. 13. The Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.' Therefore doth he observe the place appointed by God.

This should teach us to be followers of David, in respecting and observing God's ordinance for the place of his service. It is true, difference of place in respect of holiness is now in the New Testament taken away, as John iv. 21, 23; and therefore Paul willetth 'that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands unto God without wrath or doating;' 1 Tim. ii. 8. Yet, where Christ hath said, 'Where two or three meet together in my name,'—that is, by warrant from me,—'I am in the middle,' Mat. xviii. 20; and 'Go teach, I am with you to the end of the world,' Mat. xxviii. 20; therefore must we frequent diligently, and reverently use church assemblies. Consider 1 Cor. xi. 22. 'Despise ye the church of God?'—that is, the place where God's people come together for his service.

Ver. 7. *Hear me, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.*

Here David begins the second testification of his true affiance in God by humble and earnest prayer and supplication for sundry blessings, whereof the first is for mercy in audience and answer to his earnest prayers, in this verse. Wherein, the words being plain, we may observe three things: first, What David prayed for; secondly, In what manner; thirdly, His esteem of God's audience to his prayers.

For the first, David prays for audience and answer to his prayers, 'Hear, O Lord, when I cry, and answer me.' So Ps. iv. 1, 'Hear me when I call;' Ps. v. 1, 2, 'Give ear to my words, hearken to the voice of my cry;' Ps. xxviii. 1, 'Unto thee will I

cry, O Lord, my rock, be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit. Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee;' Ps. lxx. 1, 'Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer;' and Ps. cxli. 1.

*Quest.* What needs this prayer for audience, seeing God hears every word that is spoken? Ps. cxxxix. 4, and it is his property to hear prayer, Ps. lxxv. 2, whereto he hath bound himself by promise, Ps. l. 15; Mat. vii. 7.

*Ans.* The audience which David prayeth for is not the bare act of hearing, in taking notice of that he said in prayer, for he knew well that would never be wanting in God towards man; but by hearing he meaneth God's favourable act of audience, testified by gracious answers, as he saith, 'In thy faithfulness answer me,' Ps. cxliii. 1.

The reason why David here prayeth for this gracious audience, is because he knew God did many times, for just causes, deny to give such gracious answers even to the prayers of his servants. As first, when he would humble them and correct them for their sins, Ps. lxxvi. 18, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me;' John ix. 31, 'God heareth not sinners;' for sin separates between God and us, Isa. lix. 2, makes God say, 'Though ye make many prayers, I will not hear,' Isa. i. 15. So as his people complain that God seems angry against their prayers, Ps. lxxx. 4.

Secondly, When he would stir them up to more zeal and fervency in prayer than yet they have shewed. See his dealing with the woman of Canaan, coming to him for her daughter, Mat. xv. 22, 23, &c., and with the father of the child possessed with a dumb and deaf devil, Mark ix. 18.

Thirdly, When he will exercise them under some affliction, either for recreation for sin or for trial of grace, as Ps. xxii. 1, 2, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not, and in the night, and am not silent.' That was true both in David the type and in Jesus Christ the truth: yet herein that is verified which Christ said to Paul, 'My grace is sufficient for thee,' 2 Cor. xii. 9, being as good as direct audience or particular answer, for it makes them willing and able to bear the cross, which is a

gracious hearing to the prayer of the afflicted, Heb. v. 7.

This serves for instruction and admonition.

For instruction, see that the best of God's children may be denied audience for a time to their prayers, for that which befell David in the type, and Jesus Christ himself as the truth, may befall any other child of God: for 'the servant is not above the master,' Mat. x. 24, 25.

For admonition two ways: first, To beware of rash judgment, either against ourselves or others, under this dealing of God, denying audience to our prayers. That it is a great trouble to God's children, see Ps. lxxx. 4, and xxii. 1, 2; Isa. xlix. 14. That it opens the mouth of the wicked, see Ps. lxxi. 10, 11; Mat. xxvii. 42, 43.

Secondly, In this case to consider the causes of this course of God's dealing, and take them in their order: begin with sin to find it out, return into thine own heart and turn unto the Lord, as 2 Chron. vi. 37; be humble and earnest in prayer to God; and then, though God for his glory may deny thee audience in particular things, yet will he be sure to give thee something as good,—that is, the strength of patience to bear the cross, and in the end a blessed issue.

The second thing to be noted here is the manner of David's praying. He cried with his voice, which notes great fervency, great zeal, and earnestness. David was fervent and zealous in prayer unto God, he 'cried unto God with his voice;' Ps. v. 2. 'Hearken to the voice of my cry;' Ps. xvii. 1. 'Attend unto my cry;' Ps. xxii. 1, 2. 'Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? I cry in the daytime;' Ps. cxlii. 1, 5. 'I cried unto the Lord with my voice, with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication. I cried unto thee, O Lord.'

The reasons hereof are great: first, Prayer is a good thing, and zealous affection in a good thing is always good and commendable, Gal. iv. 18.

Secondly, Zeal and fervency in prayer is very moving. St James saith, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,' James v. 16. And our Saviour Christ sheweth it by two resemblances: one of the man that came to borrow bread of his neighbour by night, Luke xi. 8. 'Though

he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.' The other of the poor widow that prevailed with the unrighteous judge, Luke xviii. 1, 5.

Thirdly, God's mercies testified by gracious promises and answerable performances, did notably encourage him to be zealous and earnest in prayer. For his promises, see Ps. l. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble;' Exod. xxii. 23, 'If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry.' See for his observing God's dealing with those that cry, Ps. xxii. 4, 5, cvii. 6, 13, 19, and vi. 8, 9.

Fourthly, David's own necessities and distresses did urge and enforce him to be earnest in prayer: Ps. xviii. 4-6, 'The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God.'

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, it acquaints us with a property in prayer, both profitable and commendable, which few regard,—viz., to be zealous, and fervent, and earnest therein. They that think the service of God stands in the work done, as papists and ignorant people do, who therefore tie themselves to a set number of prayers so many times said over, cannot much regard this property. But we must know that the true God, who cannot endure lukewarm professors of his true profession, threatening to spew such out of his mouth, Rev. iii. 16, cannot like of cold or lukewarm prayers. Is not prayer a good work? Now, Christ Jesus hath redeemed us to be 'zealous of good works,' Tit. ii. 14, therefore we must not be cold in prayer.

For admonition, this serves to move every child of God to labour for this property of zeal and fervency in prayer. For which end we must first consider God's commandment requiring it: Rom. xii. 11, 12. 'Fervent in spirit, continuing instant in prayer;' Luke xi. 5-8. Christ bids ask, seek, and knock, upon the resemblance of a man's importunity prevailing with his friend to rise out of bed to lend him provision for a friend come unto him.



Secondly, We must labour to get the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of grace and supplication, and that will stir up mourning, with bitterness for sin, as Zech. xii. 10, and most earnest desires of grace and mercy, Rom. viii. 26; prayer is as incense, Ps. cxli. 2; the Spirit is the fire, Job xxxii. 18, 19; Jer. xx. 9. Now this Spirit is given in God's means, used in a holy manner, often shewed, that is, in the word and prayer, used by those that turn from sin, and desire grace, and walk in obedience to the word. Hereto we shall be well furthered by the former reasons considered; whereto we may add, that natural and heathen men have sped well with God, when they have shewed zeal in prayer, as Jonah i. 14, the mariners, and chap. iii. 8, the Ninevites.

For comfort, this makes greatly to those whose wants and miseries cause them to cry in prayer; for, though God's delay may cause them to fear God's forsaking, yet if they cry unto God, they are in no worse a case than David was, nay, than Christ Jesus was, Heb. v. 7; and shall the servant think it strange to be afflicted as his master was? Consider that he heard the rebellious Jews when they cried, Ps. cvi. 44; Judges x. 10, 16.

Thirdly, Here observe David's esteem of this work of God, when he gives audience, and answers to his prayers. David accounts it a great mercy of God to have hearing and audience to his prayers. Ps. iv. 1, 'Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.' Ps. xxx. 10, 'Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me.' Ps. lxxxiv. 3, 'Be merciful unto me, O God, for I cry unto thee daily.' Ps. cxvi. 1, 4, 5, 'I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice. I call upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee deliver my soul: gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.' Ps. cxix. 58, 'I entreat thy favour with my whole heart. Be merciful unto me, according to thy word.'

The reason is, because he, as every other man, stood guilty of sin, which separates between God and us, Ps. lix. 2.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction; see, that David was not acquainted with the opinion of papists, that hold prayer a meritorious work; for then audience should be due, not of mercy, but of debt.

For admonition; first, To every one to get good title to God's mercy, that would have assurance of audience to their prayers. Now the way is to get into covenant with God, and to walk worthy of the Lord. Now we enter covenant by believing in Christ; for that is the condition that gives us title to audience, Jer. iv. 22, 23. And we walk worthy of the Lord, and of the favour of audience, when we eschew evil, and make conscience of sin; for see John ix. 31; Ps. lxxvi. 18, 19, sin separates and hinders audience, Prov. i. 20, 28; Isa. i. 15, and lix. 1, whereto also we must adjoin conscience of well-doing; for, if we do well, we shall be accepted, Gen. iv. 7, which though it extend not unto God, for the bettering of his estate, Ps. xvi. 3, yet it makes greatly for God's glory, John xv. 8; and is good and profitable unto men, Tit. iii. 8. For God doth promise audience to those that set their love on God, and know him, that when they call he will answer, Ps. xci. 14, 15.

Secondly, Those that profess themselves to be in covenant with God must observe God's mercy in audience to their prayers, as Ps. lxxxv. 7, 8: 'Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation: I will hearken what God the Lord will say.' So did David, Ps. lxxvi. 17, 19, and cxvi. 1, 2. This we must do, that, if we find want of audience, we may appeal unto his mercy, and seek good title thereto; for gracious audience is of mercy. And if we find that God hath heard us, that then we may return praise and thanks for God's mercy, and labour to walk worthy of it. We have received many deliverances in this kind, upon our humiliation, in '88, from the invincible navy; in 1695, from the devilish powder treason; in 1625, from the fearful plague of pestilence; besides our comfortable freedom from wars, in the common trouble of other nations. Unthankfulness brings wrath, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25; we must therefore remember David's practice, Ps. cxvi. 12-14, and seeing, when we come to the Lord's table, we pray for part in Christ's redemption, let us endeavour to walk worthy of it, and shew the power of it, in leaving sin, and living godly; else we trust in lying words, if we think we are redeemed to do wickedly, as Jer. vii. 8-10, and indeed are like the dog, and so returning to vomit and filth, 2 Pet. ii. 22, 23.

Ver. 8. *My heart said unto thee, when thou saidst, Seek ye my face; Thy face, O Lord, will I seek.* Ver. 9. *Hide not thy face far from me, put not thy servant away in anger; thou hast been my help, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.*

Here David goes on in the matter of prayer, begun in the former verse; and, first, doth testify the truth and readiness of his heart to answer and obey God's command, for the seeking of his face, ver. 8; which being chiefly done in the duty and exercise of prayer, he doth, verse 9, put up humble and earnest suit unto God, for favour and mercy in sundry petitions; and to move the Lord to grant them, he makes mention of God's former favour in this kind, saying, 'thou hast been my help,' and shuts up these requests, with notable testimony of true alliance in God, calling him 'the God of his salvation.'

Here then, in these two verses, we have in general three things to handle: first, David's sincerity, in readiness to answer God's command unto his people, that they should seek his face, ver. 8. Secondly, David's humble and earnest requests, for favour and mercy, answerable to his former possession. Thirdly, David's motives propounded to God, to move him to grant his requests, ver. 9.

For the first: David's sincerity and readiness to answer God's command, for the seeking of his face, is this, 'when thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face O Lord, will I seek.' For the right understanding whereof we must know, that the speech or sentence in the original, to make it plain, requires the supply of some words, which are fitly added in our Bibles, *when thou saidst*: as the like is elsewhere, 1 Kings xx. 34, 'And I (said Ahab) will send thee away with this covenant.'

This defect of a word, to be supplied for plainness' sake, hath caused great variety amongst translators. The most ancient of them, as the Septuagint, Aquila, Symmachus, the vulgar Latin, and Jerome (whom most of the popish expositors and the Douay Bible do follow) translate the words to this effect: 'My face hath sought out,' or 'sought thee out,' making the word *face* the nominative case to the verb *sought*, whereas our translations make the word *face* the accusative case following the verb *seek*; and, though the words in the original will bear either of the former, yet seeing both were not intended by the

Holy Ghost, for this reason do I prefer our own translations before the ancients, because in the Bible the words in the original are ordinarily translated by the foresaid ancients, as ours have done, as 2 Chron. vii. 14, and not once, I take it, in all the Bible, can their translation be warranted, by shewing the like disposing of the words, where *face* is the nominative case to the verb *seek*.

Now then, taking the words in that sense which our translation gives, we have two things to note in them: first, God's commandment unto his people for the seeking of his face; secondly, David's readiness to yield obedience thereto. For the first, the words translated *seek ye my face*, are, in the original, not a question, but a command; for the verb is of the imperative mood, which biddeth or commandeth to seek. The thing to be sought is God's face, which here noteth, not simply God himself, as Exod. xx. 3, 'Thou shalt have none other gods before my face,' that is, 'before me;' but God's grace and favour in his sanctuary, where God did manifest his presence, between the cherubims, above the mercy-seat, there communing with the high priest, of all things given in charge concerning the children of Israel, Exod. xxv. 22, towards which the people were to look, when they sought God's grace and favour. Mark then, God enjoined his people the Jews to seek his face, that is, his grace and favour in the sanctuary, looking toward the mercy-seat, which is sometime called 'the face of God,' because it was a testimony of his presence among his people: Ps. cv. 4, 'Seek ye the Lord, and his strength,' (that is, the ark of the covenant, Ps. cxxxii. 8,) 'seek his face continually,' (that is, the mercy-seat, a blessed testimony of his gracious favour, and presence amongst his people,) so 2 Chron. vii. 14.

The reason or ground hereof is threefold. First and principally, By their seeking to the mercy-seat, the type, he would lead them unto Christ, that was the truth and substance: for the material tabernacle and temple was a part of the worldly sanctuary, and belonged to the ceremonial law, which led them unto Christ, Gal. iii. 24. For 'the law had them the shadow of good things to come,' Heb. x. 1; 'but the body is Christ,' Col. ii. 17. And that he was prefigured by the mercy-seat is plain, Rom. iii. 25, 'God set forth Christ Jesus to be a propitiary, (*ἱλαστήριον*)

through faith in his blood;’ giving the same name to Christ Jesus which the LXX gave to the legal mercy-seat; to which also St John alludeth plainly, 1 John ii. 2, 3, saying, ‘Jesus Christ is the propitiation (*ἱλασμός*) for our sins.’

Secondly, God herein had respect to his own glory; for this seeking of God’s face by frequenting the sanctuary was not only an obedience to his ordinance, which was very pleasing unto him, 1 Sam. xv. 22, but a singular testimony of affiance in God through Christ, which is the honour of the heart. Whereupon he accounts the neglect of this duty by his people, when they go to false gods, a forsaking of him, a thing wherewith the very heavens should be astonished, Jer. ii. 12, 13; nay, more, he accounts it their very denial, that they have any such god amongst them, 2 Kings i. 6.

Thirdly, God herein had special regard to his people’s good; for this is the right way to the fruition of his favour, which is better than life, Ps. lxxiii. 3. This makes the church to say, ‘Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved,’ Ps. lxxx. 3, 7, 19. Thus they were entitled to three great blessings. First, To sure direction in all important difficulties, as 2 Sam. xxi. 1. Secondly, To assured deliverances from all hurtful evils, as 2 Chron. xv. 2, 4, ‘If you seek him, he will be found of you;’ and ‘he that findeth him findeth life,’ Prov. viii. 35. Thus Ezra found of God a good way, Ezra viii. 21, 23.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, this charge and command of God unto his people to seek his face shews plainly that the service of God is not a matter arbitrary to God’s people—that is, such a thing as they may at pleasure use or refuse without danger of God’s displeasure, and of his heavy judgments thereupon. Under the law, the Jews were straitly enjoined to seek to the place which the Lord their God should choose, to put his name there, and thither to come and bring their burnt-offerings, sacrifices, vows, free-will offerings, &c., and there eat and rejoice before the Lord their God, Deut. xii. 5–7, 12, 17, 18, 26–28; and the Lord’s solemn feasts must every male observe, and appear before the Lord with his gift or offering, Deut. xvi. 16, 17. Yea, mark a severe threatening of judgment for the neglect of God’s worship, pro-

phetically delivered in legal terms, Zech. xiv. 17, ‘It shall be, that who will not go up, of all the families of the earth, unto Jerusalem, to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no more rain.’ And in plain terms the apostle saith to all Christians, ‘We, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear,’ Heb. xii. 28.

For admonition: first, To inform ourselves rightly in the will of God touching his worship; for, as under the law, so now, we may not do what seems good in our own eyes, Deut. xii. 8, but what the Lord appointeth; else God may say to us, as Christ did to the Jews, ‘Ye worship me in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,’ Mark vii. 7. ‘The true worshippers must worship the Father in spirit and truth,’ John iv. 23; and that in and through the mediation of Christ, John xiv. 6.

Secondly, When we know how God will be sought in holy worship, then we must be careful that we be such as shall find him gracious and favourable unto us; which estate requires two things of us: first, True repentance in regard of sins past; for if we go on in a course of any known sin, we cannot have society with God; see Ps. lxxvi. 18, ‘If I regard wickedness in my heart, God will not hear my prayer.’ John ix. 31, ‘We know that God heareth not sinners.’ ‘The throne of wickedness hath no fellowship with God,’ Ps. xciv. 20; 2 Cor. vi. 14, 16; 1 John i. 6; therefore God denieth favour to such, Ezek. xx. 3, 4; Isa. i. 15. Secondly, We must believe in God through Christ, according to the word of the gospel, which is the word of the covenant of grace, which, being received by faith, brings us truly into fellowship with God, 1 John i. 3, 4. See Heb. xi. 6.

For comfort, this makes greatly to God’s people, that make conscience of their ways, in any distress; for God bids them seek his face, wherein he calls them to him, which is sufficient ground of comfort; as the people said to the blind man whom Christ called, Mark x. 49, ‘Be of good comfort, he calleth thee.’ For so David assureth his son Solomon, a little before his death, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, ‘If thou seek him, he would be found of thee.’ And the true God is the chiefest good; so as ‘happy are the

people that be so, yea, blessed are the people that have the Lord for their God,' Ps. cxliv. 15. 'These people have played the good merchants, and found the pearl of price, better than all the world beside,' Mat. xiii. 45, 46. They may therefore, on far better grounds than Jacob did, say, 'I have enough; my son Joseph is yet alive,' Gen. xlv. 28, for Joseph died afterward; but the true God, whom the faithful have for their God, is the living God, and in Jesus Christ their loving Father, who will provide for them, not an earthly Goshen, as Joseph did for his father and his brethren, but a heavenly Canaan, even the kingdom of heaven, as Christ said to his disciples, 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom,' Luke xii. 32; and Luke xxii. 29, 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.' Worldly troubles may hasten us sooner to this happy estate, but they cannot deprive us of it, Rom. viii. 35. Therefore, 'though the outward man perish,' yet look up towards this kingdom, and lift up thy heart to the living God, thy loving Father in Christ, and 'the inner man shall be renewed daily,' 2 Cor. iv. 14-16.

The second thing to be observed is David's readiness to yield sincere obedience to this condition of God, to seek his face; hereto David's heart answered, 'Thy face, O Lord, will I seek.' Mark here, then, that David's heart was sincerely set on God's command to seek his face,—that is, his grace and favour,—in the way he had ordained, in his sanctuary. Ps. xlii. 1, 2, 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O Lord. My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?' Ps. cxix. 20, 58, 'With my whole heart have I sought thee; I entreated thy favour with my whole heart.' The word translated *favour*, פְּנִיךָ הַלֵּוּתִי, is *face* in the original; and the entreaty here meant is most earnest and importunate, for the word in the original signifieth to make sick or sorry.

The reasons hereof are many and great: first, Before this time the Lord God had begun a good work in David's heart by his Holy Spirit, and revealed himself so far forth to David, that David's heart was enamoured with the Lord, as he notably expresseth, Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 2, 'Oh how amiable are

thy tabernacles. . . . My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God;' as Ps. xlii. 1, 2, and cxliii. 6, 7, 'I stretch forth my hands unto thee,' &c.; 'Hear me speedily, my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me.' And that this was the cause of David's seeking God's face and favour, see by the like, Cant. v. 4, 'My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.' The church's beloved is Christ the Lord, his hand is his power, shewed by the work of his Spirit with the word, as Acts xi. 19-21, when this comes, the bowels yearn, as Peter's did upon the view of Christ's glory, Mat. xvii. 2, 4.

Secondly, David knew that God had special regard unto the heart, above all the parts of man, as 1 Sam. xvi. 7; and therefore calls for the heart of every one that is his child, Prov. xxiii. 26, and would have this part begin all the actions of his service. See, for hearing the word, Deut. xxxii. 46; Prov. iv. 20, 21; and for prayer, Hos. vii. 14, which, when it is wanting, he rejecteth the service, Mat. xv. 8, 9.

Thirdly, The excellency of the blessing drew his heart unto it: for God's face is God's favour and loving-kindness, wherein is life, Ps. xx. 5; nay, it is better than life, Ps. lxxiii. 1-3. Thereupon, Ps. iv. 6, 'Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us,' and Ps. lxxx. 3, 7, 19, 'Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.'

Fourthly, He knew the seeking of the heart was true and sincere seeking, such as God required, Ps. li. 6, and such as he will speed for this and all other blessings, Jer. xxix. 13; Ps. xxiv. 3, &c., the way to joy, Ps. cvi. 3, 4, to blessedness, Ps. cxix. 2.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, two ways: first, It lets us plainly see the right ground and foundation of acceptable obedience unto God in every duty which he requireth, —namely, a good heart, a heart set for God's glory therein: for the heart is the fountain of the actions, good or evil, as Christ teacheth, Mat. xii. 34, 35, 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' 'A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil

man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things,' which we are the rather to note, because wicked men, though they cannot justify their actions, yet they will plead for the goodness of their heart : they have as good a heart to God-ward as the best : which, if it were true, Christ was deceived in the place aforementioned. 'Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or the tree evil and his fruit evil,' as also Ps. lxxviii. 8, 36, 37 ; the old Jews were a stubborn and rebellions generation, a generation that set not their heart aright, they flattered him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue, for their heart was not right with him.

Secondly, See in David a double property of the godly : first, To make particular application to himself of general commands given to all God's people, as Ps. iv. 7 : so did Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 9. Secondly, That the heart of the godly is set to seek the face of God, to be made partaker of his grace and favour in Christ. See David's speech to Zadok, when he brought out the ark, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26. But most plain it is in that of Paul, Phil. iii. 7-9. 'What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ,' &c.

For admonition, two ways : first, To get such a heart as doth mind the commandments of God, and doth undertake for obedience thereto ; so did David's. This, indeed, none hath by nature, for 'every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is evil continually,' Gen. vi. 5, meaning so long as the heart remains natural, unsanctified. Therefore, they that would have a good heart like David, must wait upon God in the use of means, ordained by him for the bettering of man's heart. That it is God's work is plain, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 'I will take away your stony heart, and give you an heart of flesh,' and therefore is regeneration called 'a new creation,' 2 Cor. v. 17, which is a work proper to God. Yet God is pleased to do it in the use of means enjoined to men, which when we use in obedience to God, we have title to his blessing. Now the means to get a good heart is to be exercised much in the word and prayer : for in these ordinances is the Spirit given, which renews the soul ; as for the word is plain, Acts x. 44 ; Gal. iii. 2 : and for prayer, Luke xi. 13. Now the obedient manner of using the

foresaid means is, first, To break off the course of sin, Prov. i. 23, for reigning sin and saving grace never dwell together, 1 John v. 6. Secondly, Hunger and thirst after grace and mercy, Isa. lv. 1, and xliv. 3 ; Rev. xxi. 6. Thirdly, In the way of obedience unto that we know, Acts v. 32, wait upon God in the foresaid means, as the impotent people did at the pool of Bethesda, John v. 2-4 : 'For they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength,' Isa. xl. 31.

Secondly, Learn of David to set the heart on work on every action we perform to God ; yea, let it begin the work.

This was David's care, as Ps. lvii. 7. 'My heart is fixed, or prepared ; O God, my heart is fixed.' Consider the reason before named.

For comfort, this makes greatly to the upright-hearted, when they are not able to express in words what they conceive, or to perform for God's glory what they desire. Let them here observe that there is sweet intercourse between the Lord and an upright heart ; he knows the meaning of the sighs and groans thereof, Rom. viii. 26 ; the heart can speak to God effectually without the help of the tongue, as Ps. xxv. 1 ; Neh. ii. 4 ; and the heart can answer God's command, as in this place.

Ver. 9. *Hide not thy face far from me ; put not thy servant away in anger : thou hast been my help ; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.*

Here David, according to his holy profession in the former verse, makes humble and earnest suit unto God, that he may not be denied nor deprived of the comfort of God's favour, and the light of his countenance. This suit he puts up in variety of phrase, for the greater evidence of unfeigned desire ; and that also by couples, as Christ sent forth his disciples for their mutual strengthening ; and further backeth each couple with a strong reason. The first doubled suit is this, 'Hide not thy face far from me ; put not away thy servant in anger.' The reasons propounded to strengthen them are two : the first implied in the title *servant* ; the second expressed, drawn from further experience of God's goodness, *thou hast been mine helper*. The second couple or doubled request is this, 'Leave me not, neither forsake me ;' and the reason backing them is drawn

from David's title to God by covenant, thus plainly expressed, *O God of my salvation.*

The things, then, which we have here to handle are David's requests, and David's reasons to enforce the same. His requests are deprecatory against evils he feared, and in part felt: as the hiding of God's face, putting away in anger, God's leaving and forsaking, which all aiming at one thing, even David's feeling and fruition of God's favour, we may in them all well observe that David prayed earnestly that he might not be deprived of God's grace and favour, nor want the light of God's countenance to shine upon him. Ps. xiii. 1, 'How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?'

The reasons hereof are weighty: first, The surpassing worth and excellency of God's special favour, whereof he would not be deprived: in it is life, Ps. xxx. 5; it is better than life, Ps. lxxiii.; now, 'All that a man hath will he give for his life,' Job ii. 4.

Secondly, He knew the displeasure of God was a most heavy and grievous thing which no creature is able to bear, Ps. lxxxvii. 7, 'Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?' See Deut. xxxiii. 41, 42, 'If I whet my glittering sword,' &c. Vengeance is his, and he will recompense. Solomon saith, 'The wrath of a king is as messengers of death,' Prov. xvi. 14; what, then, is the anger of God?

Thirdly, David knew his own guilt of sin, both original, Ps. li. 5, and actual, ver. 3, 4, and so must needs conceive that God in justice might hide his face from him, be angry with him, leave him, and forsake him; as he saith, Ps. lxxx. 3, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?'

Fourthly, He was not ignorant of God's sovereignty over all, whereby he may, even for trial of grace, hide his face, and seem angry with his dearest servants. For who was better than Job? 'None in his time was like him in all the earth: an upright man, fearing God and eschewing evil,' Job i. 8. Yet who endured sorer afflictions? so as he complaineth, that God hid his face, and held him for his enemy; that he 'writ bitter things against him,' and 'made him to possess the sins of his youth,' Job

xiii. 24, 26. Yea, God himself confesseth that 'Satan moved him to destroy Job without a cause,' Job ii. 3.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction three ways. First, See in David what the godly do think of the want of God's favour, —surely, that it is a most grievous and bitter thing, as if a father should put away his child in anger, leave him and forsake him. This David manifested in his speech to Zadok, when he brought out the ark of God to carry with them: 'Carry back,' saith he, 'the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation: but if he say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him,' 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26. This is the rather to be marked, because the hearts of natural men are not affected with the least sorrow for the hiding of God's face; if they may enjoy temporal blessings, wherein their natural hearts do take delight, they desire no more; being of Saul's mind, who, when Samuel had told him God had cast him away, yet desired to be honoured before the people, 1 Sam. xv. 23, 30; he sought for popular honour, but makes no entreaty for God's favour. And, indeed, how should natural men do otherwise? The favour of God in Christ is a spiritual blessing, and the want thereof (expressed by the hiding of God's face) a spiritual judgment. These are things unknown without the work of the Spirit, as 1 Cor. ii. 14, and so no marvel if the judgment be not feared, where the contrary blessing is not discerned nor desired.

Secondly, See here that the true child of God may, for a time, want the feeling of God's special favour, and remain under the sense of God's displeasure, as left and forsaken of God. See it plain in David, Ps. xxxviii. 1, 2, &c., and lxxvii. 7-10; in the complaint of the church, Ps. xlv. 23, 24, 'Arise, cast us not off for ever. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and oppression?' and Lam. iii. 1-19, 'I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness,' &c.; and ver. 43, 14, 'Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us: thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayers should not pass through.' And Job's complaint of this es-

tate is as plain as any, chap. xiii. 24, 26. Nay more, did not our blessed Saviour, in the sense of his manhood, complain thereof? Mat. xxvii. 46. Now if God do so with the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? Luke xxiii. 31; yet remember, this distress is but for a time, Ps. xxx. 5; Isa. liv. 7, 8.

Thirdly, Here see that prayer is a blessed and sanctified means, wherein the child of God may comfortably wait for the blessing of God's favour in the want thereof, and for the removing of his anger under the signs thereof. See the promise of God himself in this case: Ps. l. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' 2 Chron. vii. 13, 14, 'If I shut heaven, that there be no rain, &c. If my people do humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins, and will heal their land.'

For admonition it serves two ways. First, That we examine ourselves, how our hearts esteem of the want of feeling God's special love and favour in Christ. If we judge it, as David did, a grievous thing and bitter, we then have undoubtedly some work of the Spirit, at least in legal compunction, breaking up the fallow-ground of the heart, and so preparing it for the seed of grace, as Acts ii. 37, 38. But if we slight it over without trouble or sorrow, as the jovial fellows of the world do, who delight in doing evil, and sport themselves in the frowardness of the wicked, as Prov. ii. 14, then certainly our case is woeful; we are not so near the state of grace as were Cain and Judas, who were touched with legal remorse upon the conscience of their heinous sins; as we may see, Gen. iv. 13, 14; Mat. xxvii. 3.

Secondly, God's children may hence learn not to be dismayed for the temporary hiding of God's face or sustaining of his anger: for nothing herein befalls them but that which appertains to man, even to God's dear children, 1 Cor. x. 13. As we may see in Job, David, Elisha the Ezerahite, Ps. lxxxviii. 1, 2, &c. Herein let us follow their godly practice, which was this: first, To consider their ways, Ps. cxix. 59, that so they might find out their sins that bring the foresaid evils. Secondly, With sorrow and grief of heart to confess against themselves, Ps. xxxii. 4, 5; Job xlii. 6. Thirdly, To cry earnestly for mercy, as for life and death, Ps. li. 1, 2, and cxliii. 1, 2.

Fourthly, Walk in new obedience: Ps. cxix. 8, 16, 'I will keep thy statutes; O forsake me not utterly. I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.' Lastly, In the use of God's ordinances, the word and prayer, to wait for comfort, as Ps. xlii. 5, 11; Isa. xliiii. 5. Read, hear, and meditate on God's word, as Ps. cxix. 13, &c.; yea, also watch and wait in prayer, Col. iv. 2; and if the fear be great, humble thy soul with fasting, as Ps. xxxv. 13. Limit not the holy one of Israel for time or measure of any blessing, as the carnal Israelites did, Ps. lxxxviii. 41, but with Job wait all our life long, chap. xiv. 14. Say with the church, Micah vii. 7-9, 'I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. When I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.'

The reasons propounded by David to move God to vouchsafe his favour and not hide his face, &c., are three. The first is implied in the title *servant*, wherewith David styles himself in the second branch of this petition, 'Put not thy *servant* away in anger.' Where, in David's judgment, this is plain, that to be God's servant is a good ground and step towards the attainment of God's favour; it is that which gives title to mercy in time of trouble, inward or outward: Ps. xxxi. 15, 16, 'Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies; make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.' Ps. lxxix. 17, 'Hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble.' Ps. lxxxvi. 4, 'Rejoice the soul of thy servant.' Isa. lxx. 13, 14, 'Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart.'

The reason is plain. Every true servant of God is certainly in covenant with God by a holy calling, 1 Cor. vii. 22, 'He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant;' so that,

whether he be bond or free, by his holy calling he belongs to God. Now, being thus in covenant with God, he is entitled to all God's blessings in Christ, and so to the fruition of God's favour: Ps. lxxxix. 3, 20, 21, 24, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: with whom my hand also shall be established. My faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him, my mercy will I keep with him for ever, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.'

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, two ways. First, that it is a blessed and happy thing to be God's true servant. Consider what the Queen of Sheba said of Solomon's servants: 1 Kings x. 8, 'Happy are these thy servants.' &c. Now Christ Jesus is greater than Solomon, Mat. xii. 42, and so a better master. Good earthly masters will honour good servants, as Prov. xxvii. 18, 'He that waiteth on his master shall be honoured;' chap. xvii. 2, 'A wise servant shall have a portion, or inheritance, among the brethren.' But however some earthly masters may be Nabals and Labans, yet God will not be so: John xii. 26, 'Where I am, there shall also my servant be.' 'If any man serve me, him will my Father honour,' see Luke xii. 37. The watchful servants are blessed; their master will make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them, as Mat. xxv. 21, 23, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter into the joy of the Lord.'

Secondly, Here see the great error of natural men, that judge it a vain thing to serve God, as Mal. iii. 14; Job xxi. 15, which to be the common thought of most men, their behaviour doth plainly bewray; for mark their carriage for diligence in God's service on the Lord's day, compared with the pains, and pleasure also, they take about worldly commodities in the week day. Their behaviour saith aloud, that their heart thinks God's service is a vain thing, else they would take more pains and pleasure therein; undoubtedly they do not conceive of, nor believe the testimony of God, touching the prosperity of his servants; for God taketh pleasure therein, Ps. xxxv.

27, else he would never undertake for their direction in the way they ought to walk, for their provision for all needful blessings, for their protection from all hurtful evils, and for their remuneration, both here and for ever, as the Scripture saith he doth.

For admonition, it serves, first, to the wicked, to beware of wronging God's servants, and to refrain from that course; see, Acts v. 38, 39, Gamaliel's counsel to the rulers of the Jews, about the apostles, and his reason, lest they be found even to fight against God; as Christ said to Saul, Acts ix. 4, 5, 'Why persecutest thou me,' &c.; see Num. xii. 8, 'Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?' and Ps. cv. 14, 15; Zech. ii. 8. And if ever they desire the privileges of God's servants, they must labour to get into covenant with God, doing as Saul did, Acts ix. 5, 6: first, Desire to know Christ, then subject themselves to his holy will, and wait in prayer for grace and mercy; see Acts ix. 9-11.

Secondly, God's children, that have entered covenant with God, must be careful to shew themselves God's servants; for profession without practice is nothing but hypocrisy, making us like the church of Sardis, who 'had a name to be alive, but was dead,' Rev. iii. 1. Therefore we must get the certain and infallible properties of good servants, which are partly inward, and partly outward. The inward are good affections, which are specially three: first, Fear and reverence, Mal. i. 6; Ps. ii. 11. Secondly, Conscionable obedience to his revealed will. Reason from Eph. vi. 5-7, and from the centurion's confession, Mat. viii. 9, as from the less to the greater. Without this, none are acknowledged for servants, Luke vi. 46. This must be seen, both in eschewing evil, and doing good, as God saith of his servant Job, chap. i. 8, 9; yea, we must shew our well-doing, in improving our Master's talents, Mat. xxv. 23, 25; in fighting for him and for the faith, John xviii. 36; Jude 3; in waiting for his coming, Luke xii. 36. And in all these we must be servants in ordinary, not only retainers that serve God by fits. Thirdly, We must patiently suffer his corrections, Heb. xii. 9, 10. Reason from 1 Pet. ii. 18, &c., as from the less to the greater. Fourthly, We must praise God for his mercy, Ps. cxxxiv. 1, l. 23, and ex. 175.

The second reason which David useth to move



the Lord not to hide his face, &c., is plainly expressed, drawn from his own experience of God's former mercies in times of trouble, saying, 'Thou hast been my help,' that is, whereas heretofore I have been in distress and danger, thou hast helped me, and therein shewed thy favour toward me; now, hereupon saith David, knowing thee to be unchangeable, I appeal unto thee for like mercy that I have formerly felt.

In this reason we have two things to note. First, The thing confessed by David, simply considered by itself; secondly, With reference to the end for which David here propounds it. For the first, The thing confessed by David, simply considered, is this:

That God was David's helper, and so had been: Ps. liv. 4, 'Behold, God is mine helper;' Ps. iii. 3, 'Thou, Lord, art a shield for me: my glory, and the lifter up of my head;' Ps. xxx. 10, 'Hear, Lord, and have mercy upon me; Lord, be thou mine helper.'

The reason hereof is threefold. First, God's free grace and mercy receiving David into covenant, and therein undertaking to become his helper and deliverer: Ps. lxxxix. 3, 21, 22, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant; with whom my hand shall be established. The enemy shall not exact upon him,' &c. And this is answerable to that which God saith to his people in general. Ps. l. 5, 15.

Secondly, David put his trust in God, whereby he was entitled to God's help in trouble: Ps. xxviii. 7, 'The Lord is my strength and my shield: mine heart trusted in him, and I am helped;' for indeed to such God becomes a helper, Ps. xxxvii. 39, 40, and xxxiii. 18, 19.

Thirdly, David walked before God in conscionable obedience, which gave him title to this blessing—to have the Lord to be his helper. Ps. xviii. 16–18, 'He sent from above; he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity; but the Lord was my stay,' &c.; ver. 21, 'For I have kept the ways of the Lord,' &c., which was answerable to God's general promise, Deut. xxviii. 1, 2, 7, and Ps. lxxxix. 13–16.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction; in that which David professeth we may see a notable privilege of the godly, who be in covenant with God, do love and fear God, and trust in him, and testify the same by conscionable obedience—these have this prerogative, that the true God is their helper, which, to be a great blessing, is plainly affirmed with very significant illustration, Ps. cxlvi. 3–5. For princes are potent earthly helpers, but vain is their help without the Lord; for their breath is in their nostrils, but the God of Jacob is the living God, who doth neither slumber nor sleep, Ps. cxxi. 1–3, &c., and so is the best helper, as we may see at large, Ps. xci. throughout, especially ver. 9, 14, 15, whence he is by way of excellence styled 'the deliverer,' Rom. xi. 26, because, as Nebuchadnezzar said, none can deliver as he doth, Dan. iii. 28, 29; which is plain also by Daniel's delivery from the lions' den, Dan. vi.; which made Paul to say, 'Though we be compassed about on every side, yet we are not in a strait,' &c., 2 Cor. iv. 8; for the way of help is never shut to the prayer of faith, Ps. l. 15. Nay, man's extremity is God's opportunity, and therefore hath God lessened outward means for the plainer evidence of his own power, Judges vii. 4.

For admonition it serves two ways. First, To labour diligently to get into ourselves the grounds of this prerogative, in having the true God for our helper, as David had. The way hereto we may see in David. First, Get truly and rightly into covenant with God, and rest not in the outward title of profession, having only the outward seals thereof; for so far went the foolish virgins, Mat. xxv. 2, 3, and Judas, and Simon Magus; but as Paul said of the Jews, Rom. ii. 28, 29, their outward circumcision did not make them such, no more doth our outward baptism, as 1 Pet. iii. 21. Therefore we must get the ingrafting grace of true faith, which purifies the heart, Acts xv. 7, wherein stands true inward baptism; for where God establisheth the covenant of grace, he writes the law in the inward parts, Heb. viii. 10, 12. Then professing this estate, of being in covenant with God, get the inward saving graces of love and fear, and from them bring forth the fruits of new obedience, as David did, and this prerogative of having God for our helper shall be assured unto us, for he hath said, 'I will not fail thee nor forsake thee,' Heb. xiii. 5.

Secondly, To watch carefully and constantly against that thing which will deprive us of this privilege, and that is sin; for it is a work of darkness, wherewith God will have no society, Ps. xciv. 20; 1 John i. 6; it separates between God and us, Isa. lix. 2. Whereupon the Lord said to his own people the Jews, he would deliver them no more out of the hands of their enemies, Judges x. 13, 14. Therefore, with David, we must hide God's sayings in our hearts that we may not sin against him, Ps. cxix. 11; and so strive to keep ourselves from our iniquity, Ps. xviii. 23.

Secondly, Consider this prerogative professed by David, in having God for his helper, with reference to the end for which he doth here mention it,—which is, to move the Lord not to hide his face from him, &c., because formerly he hath shewed himself gracious and favourable towards him; and therein this is plain,—

That David makes his own experience of God's help in former evils a ground of prayer for present favour in his renewed troubles. When David was in the wilderness of Judah flying from Saul's persecution, (Ps. lxxiii., the title.) in ver. 7 he pleadeth thus for mercy: 'Because thou hast been my help, therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.' Ps. lxxvii. 2, 5, 'In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord. . . . I considered the days of old.' Ps. lxxxix. 49. 'Lord, where are thy former loving-kindnesses?' Ps. lxxi. 4-6, 'Deliver me, O Lord, out of the hand of the wicked. . . . For thou art my hope, O Lord God, thou art my trust, even from my youth. By thee I have been holden up from the womb.' Vers. 17, 18, 'O God, thou hast taught me from my youth. . . . Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not.'

The reason hereof is plain: David knew the true God was unchangeable and immutable, not only in his essence, but also in his love, favour, and mercy towards his elect, who are his redeemed in and by Christ Jesus, with whom his covenant of grace is everlasting, so as he will never turn away from them to do them good, Jer. xxxii. 40. Whereupon he saith, 'I am the Lord, and I change not, and ye sons of Jacob are not confounded.' Mat. iii. 6; 'forasmuch as he loved his own which were in the world, to the end he loved them,' John xiii. 1. For

though he repent of temporal gifts and blessings,—as of making of Saul king, 1 Sam. xv. 11,—yet his 'gifts and calling'—which concern salvation in Christ—'are without repentance.' Now David's holy calling entitling him to this covenant, he might plead for the renewing of God's favour in present troubles, upon the sense and feeling thereof in former times.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, learn here in David one notable way of comfort in time of trouble,—to wit, search and try whether God hath been thine helper from under former evils, for then thou mayest with David plead for present help and comfort: so doth the church in their renewed troubles, after their return from the captivity of Babylon. Ps. lxxxv. 1, &c., 'Lord, thou hast been favourable to thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people. . . . Wilt thou not revive us again? . . . Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.' So Ps. xlv. 1, 9, 23, 'We have heard with our ears, our fathers have declared unto us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old. . . . But thou hast cast us off, and puttest us to shame. . . . Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever.' &c. Isa. li. 9-11, 'Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord. . . . Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep? . . . Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return.' &c.; and Isa. lxiii. 11-14.

For admonition, this serves notably for every child of God in time of trouble: become a follower of David in observing God's former mercy in helping us, and so we shall be encouraged in renewed evils. Did not David thus animate himself to fight with Goliath? 1 Sam. xvii. 34; and St Paul did so encourage himself against troubles: 2 Tim. iv. 16-18, 'At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. . . . Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; . . . and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work.' Now no true child of God can want experience of former help, when he may strongly reason for his comfort from the greater to the less, as David did, Ps. lvi. 13, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt thou

not deliver my feet from falling?' So may the true child of God say, Thou, by thy holy calling to the faith, hast delivered me from the power of darkness, in the bondage of sin and Satan, as Col. i. 13, and wilt thou not deliver me from this or that carnal evil? 'If God spared not his own Son, but gave him for us, how shall he not with him give us all things?' Rom. viii. 32. Indeed the signs of God's favour may be hid sometimes from God's dearest servants, as Ps. lxxvii. 7-9, 'Will the Lord cast off for ever?' &c. But we must then consider the cause, which is either correction for sin or trial of grace, in which the way to comfort is to repent of sin and to labour for patience, remembering that God doth help, not only when he gives deliverance out of evil, but even when he gives strength of grace to bear it, as 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9; Heb. v. 7.

The third thing propounded by David to move the Lord not to hide his face from him nor forsake him, is David's title to the blessing of salvation from God, by virtue of the covenant wherein he stood with God even for this blessing, which he thus expresseth, 'O God of my salvation:' where by salvation he meaneth the great salvation, which is eternal life by Jesus Christ, Heb. ii. 3, and with it temporal preservation in this world, 'Therefore, do not hide thy face, do not forsake me.'

In this reason we have two things to note: first, The thing professed by David; secondly, The end for which he mentioneth it. For the first; the thing professed by David is his particular and personal claim unto salvation from God for himself: 'O God of my salvation,' thou art unto me the God of salvation; upon thee I rely, both for life eternal in heaven, and temporal preservation here on earth. Ps. xviii. 2, 'The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, the horn,—that is, the strength—of my salvation;' Ps. xxv. 5, 'Thou art the God of my salvation;' Ps. li. 14, 'Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation;' Ps. lxii. 6, 7, 'He only is my rock and my salvation. In God is my salvation and my glory.'

The true reason hereof is, first, God's mere grace and favour in Christ, freely accepting of David into covenant with himself, whereby he becomes the God of salvation unto him, as the church calleth God, Ps. lxxviii. 20: see Ps. lxxxix. 3, 21, 36, 'I have

made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, with whom my hand shall be established. He shall cry unto me, 'Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation,' And hereupon David saith, 'I am thine, save me,' Ps. cxix. 94.

Secondly, With the favour of acceptance into covenant, God vouchsafed to work in David's heart such inward graces as did maintain and continue unto David sure title to God's salvation: as, first, Trust and affiance in God: Ps. lxxxvi. 2, 'Save thy servant that trusteth in thee;' Ps. xxv. 2, 'O my God, I trust in thee.' Secondly, Love unfeigned, whereby his heart did cleave to God: Ps. xviii. 1, 2, 'I will love thee, O Lord my strength. The Lord is my rock.' Thirdly, David did fear God and reverence him in his heart: Ps. cxix. 120, 'My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, I am afraid of thy judgments.' Now he 'will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry and save them.'

This serves for instruction, and for admonition, and for comfort.

For instruction, see that it is a right and privilege of them that be truly godly, by particular and special faith to apply God's blessings of the covenant to themselves: so David did ordinarily, and Paul: Gal. ii. 20, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me;' 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.' Now herein he is a pattern to believers. 1 Tim. i. 16; which is the rather to be marked, because papists deny there is any such special faith for particular and personal assurance of the great blessings of the covenant, but only a general applying of them as they belong to God's church. But so the truly godly should go no further than wicked men, nay, than the very devils do; for they know that there is a God, and believe his goodness in Christ belongs to his church. Neither is it true that particular assurance of the many blessings of the covenant is only a fruit of special and extraordinary revelation, for the Scriptures testify it comes from true particu-

lar ordinary saving graces: as faith, 1 John v. 13, and love, 1 John iii. 14.

For admonition; every one that desires the comfort of this estate must labour to testify the truth of being in covenant with God, by those graces that did entitle David to the great blessings of the covenant, even true faith in God, through Christ—true love and true fear of God. The getting of faith is in the reverent exercise of the word, Rom. x. 17, to pray humbly and earnestly for the work of the Spirit, which is the worker of this grace, 2 Cor. iv. 13. The grace of love to God in our hearts is a fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22, and so gotten in and by the reverent use of the same means, the word and prayer, whereby the Spirit is given, with which we must also join endeavour to feel the love of God in Christ towards us in justification and sanctification, and then shall we out of doubt love him, as 1 John iv. 19. And the grace of reverence and fear is a fruit of the same Spirit, Isa. xi. 2, and so gotten as the other, when by the word we are taught rightly to conceive of God and of ourselves.

For comfort, this makes greatly to those that, being in covenant with God, do testify the truth of their faith in Christ, of their love and fear of God: which is rightly done by the fruits of these graces, according to Christ's rule, 'The tree is known by his fruits,' Mat. xii. 33. Now the sure fruit of true faith is the saving work of the word, 1 Thes. ii. 13; the fruit of love is obedience in doing good for God's glory, 1 John v. 3; the fruit of fear is obedience to God in eschewing evil, Exod. xx. 20; Prov. viii. 13, and xiv. 27.

Secondly, Consider David's claim to have God for the God of his salvation, with the end for which he doth here make it, which is to move God not to hide his face from him, nor to leave him nor forsake him; and then this is plain, that they that have God for the God of their salvation have a good ground of assurance that he will not for ever hide his face from them, nor leave them, nor forsake them. I say for *ever*, because, for a long time, God may hide his face and seem to leave and forsake, as Ps. xlii. 1, 2, 'How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face,' &c.; and lxxvii. 7, 8, 'Will the Lord cast off for ever? Is his mercy clean gone?' But if they be his by

covenant, he will certainly return and shew mercy, see Ps. xxx. 5, 'His anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning;' Isa. xlix. 14–16, 'Zion saith, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child,' &c.; and chap. liv. 7, 8, 'For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but in great mercies will I gather thee,' &c.

The reason is from God's faithfulness in the covenant of grace in Christ, which is established in the very heavens: Ps. lxxxix. 2, 'Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it;' 1 Thes. v. 24, 'If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself;' 2 Tim. ii. 13. If we mark well, the causes of God's forsaking those that be truly in covenant are ever temporary, answerable whereunto must the forsaking itself be—to wit, correction for sin, and trial of grace: for they that are effectually called are born of God, and so cannot sin unto death, 1 John iii. 9, and v. 18, unto whom God's corrections are, with instruction, the way of life: for thereby God humbles them for their sins, and so brings them to repentance, as Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. And the end which God made with Job shews that God's trials of grace make them come forth as gold, Job xxxiii. 10.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, see here a plain evidence of great gain in true godliness, as 1 Tim. iv. 8, and vi. 6; for their piety gives evidence of their being in covenant, and then their troubles, though they may be many and grievous, yet certainly they are but temporary, as Ps. xxxiv. 19, 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth them out of them all;' Ps. xxxvii. 7; 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace: so that a man shall say, Verily there is fruit for the righteous,' Ps. lvi. 11.

For admonition, to every one that lives in the church to give diligence to get this estate, to have the true God for the God of our salvation: then we may be sure God's leaving and forsaking will not be overlong, Ps. exix. 8. Now this requires, first, True repentance in forsaking all sin in respect of dominion, for, Ps. exix. 155, 'Salvation is far from the wicked;' 1 John i. 6. Then get the forenamed

graces of faith, love, and fear, and certainly the covenant of grace in Christ shall be stable unto us.

Ver. 10. *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.*

In the former verse, the prophet David prayed that the Lord would not leave him nor forsake him, moving God thereto by this, that God was the God of his salvation: and here, prosecuting the same matter, he testifies his affiance and confidence in God, for the enjoying of the blessing there prayed for; which testimony he setteth forth by way of comparison, preferring God's tender care over him for his preservation, before the care of his own parents, both father and mother, whom common nature bound to be dearly and tenderly careful over him: saying, 'When (or although) my father and my mother forsake me, yet the Lord will gather, or take me up.'

Which words being plain, we have in them two points to note—the first implied, the second expressed. The thing implied is this:

That David's father and mother, and so his dearest and nearest friends, might leave him and forsake him in times of distress; Ps. xxxviii. 11, 'My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore, and my kinsmen stand afar off.' Ps. lxxxviii. 8, 18, 'Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness:' as if he should have said, Now I am in misery, I cannot see them, they will not see me.

The reason hereof is twofold; first, Their fear of Saul their king, who was a furious, bloody-minded man, as may appear (beside his inhuman carriage to David, whose works towards Saul were very good, as 1 Sam. xix. 4, 5, 10, 11) by his barbarous dealing with the Lord's priests, whom he put to the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, without any just cause, 1 Sam. xxii. 18, 19; yea, further, by his unnatural dealing with his own son, whom he did not only shamefully revile, but most unaturally seek to slay, for his love and kindness unto David, 1 Sam. xx. 30, 31, 33. Hereupon David's friends might justly fear his cruel hands; for they

might say, If he would not spare his own son for David's sake, what will he do to us, if we shew David any kindness? And hence no doubt it was that David's father and mother, and all their house, went down to David, when he was in the cave of Adullam, that they might be out of danger from Saul's fury, 1 Sam. xxii. 1, 3.

Secondly, This might befall David by divine disposition, for the trial of David's faith and patience, as in like case it befell Job, chap. xix. 13, 14, 19, 'He hath put my brethren far from me, and my acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. All my friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me.'

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction two ways: first, It shews most plainly how vain and uncertain the help of man is in time of need: Ps. lx. 11, 'Give us help from trouble; for vain is the help of man.' Ps. lxxii. 9, 'Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.'

The vanity and uncertainty of man's help stands upon a double ground in man: first, The mutability of his affection, whose greatest favour may soon be changed into sore displeasure, as Ahasuerus was towards Haman, whom he highly honoured for a while, Esther iii. 1, 2, but soon after caused him to be hanged upon a gallows, which Haman had prepared for Mordecai, of fifty cubits high, chap. vii. 9, 10; and in Ammon towards Tamar, whose future hatred of her, after he had ravished her, exceeded his former love wherewith he had loved her, 2 Sam. xiii. 15. Secondly, Upon the instability of his condition, whereby in his best estate he is altogether vanity, walking in a vain show, Ps. xxxix. 5, 6, 'For what man liveth, and shall not see death?' Ps. lxxxix. 48. Now when death cometh, 'he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.' Ps. cxlvi. 4; then can he do nothing for himself, less for others.

Secondly, See in David, what may be the case of God's own dear children, even to be forsaken of their nearest and dearest earthly friends in time of distress: Ps. lxxviii. 9, 20, 'I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's

children. I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.' So Paul complains, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 'At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me.' Holy Job saith, 'To him that is afflicted, pity should be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty. My brethren have dealt deceitfully, as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away,' Job vi. 14, 15. Yea, this was the lot and portion of our blessed Saviour at his apprehension: Mat. xxvi. 56, 'Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.'

For admonition it serves two ways: first, That seeing father and mother may forsake us, we put not our trust in men, be they never so near or dear unto us in nature. This is David's counsel: Ps. cxlvi. 3, 'Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help;' remember his mortality, there mentioned: ver. 4, 'His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth: in that very day his thoughts perish.' And add thereto the consideration of his mutability in affection before mentioned, with the Lord's threatening of a curse to him that trusteth in man, Jer. xvii. 5, 6. Indeed, we may trust to men as the means, but not as the foundation of our help.

Secondly, That we be not dismayed when our friends do fail us; we see by Job, David, and our Saviour Christ, that it is no strange thing. Reason as Christ doth: Mat. x. 24, 25, 'The disciple is not above his master,' &c.; and Luke xxii. 31, 'If they have done these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?'

The second thing to be here observed is purposely intended, that when David's nearest and dearest friends forsook him, then the Lord would gather him up. Ps. cxlii. 4, 5, 7, 'I looked on my right hand, and beheld; but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul. I cried unto the Lord, Thou art my refuge; thou wilt deal bountifully with me.' Ps. iv. 8, 'Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety,' Ps. lxii. 6, 9, 'He only is my rock, and my salvation; he is my defence. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie.'

The reason of this special favour from God to David was threefold. First, David stood rightly

and truly in covenant with God; he was one of God's people, and had the Lord for his God, and so was interested in God's special providence for protection and preservation. See Ps. lxxxix. 3, 20-22, 28, 35, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen,' &c.

Secondly, David trusted in God: Ps. vii. 1, 'O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust.' Now 'they that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion, that standeth fast for ever.' Ps. cxv. 1, 'The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.' Ps. ix. 9, 10, 'God is he that saveth by his right hand them that put their trust in him from those that rise up against them;' Ps. xvii: see Ps. xci. 1, &c., 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,' &c.

Thirdly, David was holy in life and conversation, which gave him good assurance of special preservation: see Ps. xviii. 17, 23, 'He delivered me from my strong enemies. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.' 'The Lord forsaketh not his saints,' Ps. xxxvii. 28.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, See here, in that which David professeth, the stability of God's love towards those that be truly his, as David was; for when their nearest and dearest friends do forsake them, yet God will not. Heb. xiii. 5, 'He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' John xiii. 1, 'Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.' John vi. 39, 'This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing.' This we should observe and mark to strengthen our souls against the popish and Arminian error of final and total falling from true grace. But blessed be God, it is as false as uncomfortable, crossing the will of the Father and the fidelity of Christ Jesus before named, as also the work of the Spirit; which is permanent, as John iv. 14, with chap. vii. 37-39. If any that profess true religion, and give good hopes for a time, do fall away, they shew by

their apostasy that they began in hypocrisy, or at the best were but like the stony ground, who believe for a time, Luke viii. 13, having only a human, acquired faith, not that precious faith, 2 Pet. i. 1, which is infused by the Spirit, Gal. v. 22, who is therefore called the Spirit of faith, 2 Cor. iv. 13, and the Spirit of power, 2 Tim. i. 7; greater than the evil spirit which is in the world, 1 John iv. 4, abiding in God's children, 1 John ii. 27, even for ever, John xiv. 16, 17, being in the operation of saving grace a fountain of living water, springing up unto eternal life, whereof whosoever drinketh shall never be more athirst, John iv. 14. This is that free spirit which doth establish the godly in the state of grace, and is God's seal and earnest in their hearts, 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; Eph. i. 13, 14,

*Object.* But the godly may commit mortal sins, as David did, in adultery and murder; now an adulterer is the member of a harlot, 1 Cor. vi. 13, and a murderer is the child of the devil, John viii. 44; 1 John iii. 12; was he not then fallen from grace?

*Ans.* It cannot be denied; but for these heinous sins David was justly under the wrath of God, till, by the renewing of his repentance and faith in the Messiah, he obtained atonement. But yet under the guilt of these sins he differed much from the impenitent and unregenerate, not only in regard of God's certain purpose to renew him by repentance and restore him into favour, but even in present state of soul two ways; first, That the seed of grace did then remain, 1 John iii. 9.

Secondly, That he sinned not with full consent, Rom. vii. 17, 19, 20, and so could not be so totally under the curse as the unregenerate are. For the better conceiving whereof, we must know that every regenerate man, whilst he is in the world, hath in him both flesh and spirit, inbred corruption, and renewed grace, and so consisteth, as it were, of a double person—the old man, which is 'corrupt through deceivable lusts,' and 'the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,' Eph. iv. 22, 24. Now when the child of God committeth sin, even grievous sins, as David did, to speak as Paul doth of himself, it is not he that doth it so far forth as he is regenerate, but he so far forth as he is corrupt, which Paul calleth 'sin that dwelleth in him,' Rom. vii. 20. His service of sin is with and

from the flesh; but in his mind renewed he serves the law of Christ, ver. 25, which shows that grace in the habit and seed and root doth then remain, when and while corruption in sundry particular actions doth prevail. Which to be true is plain also by St Peter, who denied his master with cursing and swearing, which in itself was a fearful mortal sin, Mat. xxvi. 72, 74, even after that comfortable speech of Christ unto him, 'Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not,' Luke xxii. 31, 32. Shall we say he now by denying his master lost all grace, whenas Christ had prayed for the continuance of his faith? Nay, rather acknowledge that this failing was in this particular act, not in the habit and seed of grace.

Secondly, See here the happiness of the godly, who indeed alone have the Lord for their God; for he is the strong and stable helper, who will safely keep those that be his when all other helps do fail, Ps. xxxvii. 28, 33, 'He forsaketh not his saints. The Lord will not leave him in the hand of the wicked;' ver. 24, 'Though he fall, yet he shall not be cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand,' Ps. xxxiv. 19, 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of all.' See Job viii. 20, 'God will not cast away an upright man,' Chap. x. 19, 'He shall deliver thee in six troubles, and in seven there shall no evil touch thee.' 'Happy therefore is the man that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God,' Ps. cxlvi. 5. 'Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord,' Ps. cxlv. 15.

For admonition, it serves effectually to move every one that desires this comfortable state, that when dearest and nearest friends do forsake him, yet then the Lord may take him up, to give all diligence both to get and preserve those graces in his soul, and also to testify that behaviour in life which did entitle David to this happy estate; as, namely, to get truly into covenant with God, to trust in the Lord, and to shew the truth hereof by new and true obedience. Men in the world will serve hard apprenticeships for temporal and worldly freedoms, in corporations and privileged places; how much more should we take

pains for this great privilege of the citizens of Zion, to have the Lord for our God.

For comfort, this makes greatly to the godly: in times of distress they must call to mind this property in God, to be more firm and faithful to those that be his, than natural parents are to their dearest children: for which, besides this text, see Isa. xlix. 14, 15, 'Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me,' &c.; with Luke xi. 13, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' Let us make sure that we be rightly in covenant with God, and then we may say with David, 'The Lord is on my side: I will not fear: what can man do unto me?' Ps. cxviii. 6. 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none evil: for thou art with me,' Ps. xxiii. 1, 4.

Ver. 11. *Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.*

Ver. 12. *Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.*

In these two verses, the prophet David returns again unto prayer, and begs of God both instruction and direction in regard of his enemies, ver. 11, and also preservation out of their hands, in regard of their unconscionable dealing, and cruel minds towards him, ver. 12.

For instruction and direction thus he prays, 'Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.' For the meaning, *God's way* in Scripture is taken diversely: sometimes for his own administration and doing, or working, as Job. xxvi. 14, 'Lo, these are part of his ways,' having spoken of many of his marvellous works in the former verses, 7, 8, &c.: as afterward, Behemoth is called 'the chief of the ways of God,'—that is, of his works, chap. xl. 19. Ps. lxxvii. 19, 'Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters; thy footsteps are not known;' which hath reference to vers. 14, 15, 'Thou art the God that doest wonders,' &c. Ps. ciii. 7, 'He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.' Other while, and most commonly, *God's way* is that

wherein he would have man to walk—that is, the course of life and dealing which he would have men to take; as Jethro saith to Moses, Exod. xviii. 20, 'Thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do;' see Jer. xlii. 3. Herein David desires to be instructed of God. Yea, further, he would have God not only to teach him the way, but to lead him in a plain path—that is, such a path as is right and straight, without any crookedness; and such is the way of God's word, the course and behaviour which God there prescribes them, as Prov. viii. 6, 'The opening of my mouth shall be right things;' the same word, בְּיִשְׁרָיִם, which is here used, further expounded, ver. 8, 9, 'All the words of my mouth are in righteousness,' &c. And this favour he desires because of his enemies—that is, of such as did observe and watch him for advantage to do him hurt.

In the words thus understood, note two things: first, His double request made to God; secondly, The reason of them both. For his requests, the first is this, David beseecheth God to teach him that way of his, wherein he would have him to walk: so Ps. v. 8, 'Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness. Make thy way plain before my face;' Ps. xxv. 4, 'Shew me thy ways, O Lord;' Ps. cxliii. 8, 'Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk;' Ps. lxxxvi. 11, 'Teach me thy way, O Lord.'

The reasons hereof are three: first, In regard of God, to glorify him, by seeking unto him for this blessing; for God undertakes to teach the godly that be in covenant with him, as it is written in the prophets, 'and they shall be all taught of God,' John vi. 45; Ps. xxxii. 8, 'I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go;' Prov. iv. 11, 'I have taught thee in the way of wisdom.'

Secondly, In regard of himself, sundry ways: first, Because of his own inability of himself to know them, without God's teaching; for the light of nature is but darkness in the ways of God. Mat. vi. 23, 'For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him: he cannot know them, (meaning of himself,) because they are spiritually discerned.' This



is manifest by the eunuch : Acts viii. 30, 31, 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' saith Philip to him; he answers by denial,—'How can I, except some man should guide me?' Secondly, For his better enabling to obedience; for knowledge goes before doing. John xiii. 17, 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them;' Joshua i. 8, '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 according to all that is written therein.'

Thirdly, For his spiritual joy and comfort; for knowledge is a spiritual light, 2 Cor. iv. 6, and so very pleasing and comfortable to those that without it are in darkness: as Eccles. xi. 7, 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.' Hence we read, that many have greatly rejoiced when they have been taught the knowledge of God's ways: Neh. viii. 12, 'All the people went their way to eat and to drink, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.' So the eunuch 'went his way rejoicing,' after he had been instructed and baptized by Philip, Acts viii. 39; and there was great joy in Samaria, after they were converted to the faith by Philip, chap. viii. 6, 8.

Thirdly, Because of his enemies, as here he saith in plain words; for in God's ways there is safety. Here God's angels have charge to keep the golly, Ps. xci. 11; 'When thou goest in this way, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble,' Prov. iv. 12. These ways of God are ways of pleasure, and all the paths thereof are paths of peace, Prov. iii. 17. Here nothing offends the golly, Ps. cxix. 165; nay, here is singing of heart, Ps. cxxxviii. 5, with Ps. lxxv. 14. This safety from enemies in the ways of God, the Lord assured his people: Deut. xxviii. 17, 'If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all his commandments, the Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face.' &c.; Ps. lxxxi. 13, 14, 'Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways; I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned mine hand against their adversaries.'

This David found true in his own person: Ps. xviii. 16, 17, 21, 'He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemies. For I have kept the ways of the Lord,' &c.

This serves for instruction and admonition.

For instruction; see plainly by David's prayer that there is more good to be had in the ways of God than natural men imagine, else David would never have begged of God so earnestly to be taught therein. Consider but some of the aforesaid reasons that moved him so to pray, as his direction unto acceptable obedience, wherein men are instilled unto all God's blessings, as Deut. xxviii. 1-3, &c.; Ps. cxix. 1. His inward joy and consolation, which is an inseparable fruit of God's instruction: Ps. cxix. 162, 'I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil;' Jer. xv. 16, 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.' Lastly, His safety and protection herein from the hand of his enemies; when God saith to his church, 'All thy children shall be taught of the Lord,' he addeth withal, 'and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established; thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear.' &c. Are not these great blessings? What shall we say then of natural men, that say unto God, 'Depart from us: we desire not the knowledge of thy ways!' Job xxi. 14. Surely 'the god of this world hath blinded their eyes;' they are under that curse, whereby they become 'like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh,' Jer. xvii. 6.

For admonition it serves notably, that our behaviour be like David's, in praying unto God to teach us his ways. They are not<sup>1</sup> undoubtedly contained in Scripture, which is the perfect register of God's revealed will, shewing our duty perfectly, for all things needful to be believed and done unto eternal life. In it we have expressed particular rules for all the duties of our general calling of Christianity, which requirith piety towards God, justice, love, and mercy towards our brethren, with sobriety and temperance towards our bodies, and care and diligence for the gain and growth of grace in our souls, as Tit. ii. 12; 2 Pet. i. 5-7. In it also we

<sup>1</sup> Qu. "most" *l—Ed.*

have general rules for the well ordering and managing of our particular callings, which respect the church, commonwealth, or family. For magistrates, see Exod. xviii. 21, 22, with Dent. xvii. 8, 9, &c.; 2 Chron. xix. 9-11. For ministers, 1 Tim. iii. 2, 3, &c., and 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. For husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, their godly behaviour in general is plainly propounded, Eph. v. 22, 23, &c., and vi. 1, &c., to 10; Col. iii. 18, &c.; Tit. ii. 1, &c.; 1 Pet. ii. 13, &c.

And that our prayers this way may be available, we must also labour in life to be such as God will teach—that is, first, penitent persons breaking off the course of sin: Prov. i. 23. 'Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.' Hosea vi. 1, 3. 'Come, and let us return unto the Lord: then shall we know;' but the wicked and impenitent shall not be taught of God, he will not be inquired of by them, Ezek. xiv. 1, &c. Those that are laden with sin are 'ever learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth,' 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7. Secondly, Diligent in using God's ordinances in a holy manner. God's ordinances for knowledge are the word and prayer. The word must be reverently heard, read, and meditated: Ps. cxix. 99, 'I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation;' and prayer gets wisdom, James i. 5. The holy manner of using these ordinances is in humility, and yielding obedience to that they do know, John vii. 17; for such have a promise of the Spirit, which God hath given to them that obey him, Acts v. 32, which is that anointing that teacheth all needful things, 1 John ii. 20, 27.

The second petition which David here puts up unto God is, that God would lead him in a plain path—that is, in a path that is right and straight, wherein is no erring nor straying out of God's way, even in a path of righteousness, as some translate it. In which petition note two things: the first implied. That the paths of God's way are plain paths, such as are straight and right, without crooked turnings: Prov. iv. 11, 'I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths;' Prov. viii. 6, 8, 'The opening of my lips shall be right things,' 'All the words of my mouth are in righteousness, there is nothing froward or perverse in them.'

Therefore St Paul calls them 'the straight ways of God,' Acts xiii. 10.

The reason is plain; these paths are of God's own tracing out, being indeed nothing else but plain evidences of his will, which in everything is right and equal; for God's willing of a thing makes it good, though otherwise it were most abominable, if he should not require it: as is most plain in the fact of Abraham, when he offered up his son Isaac, for which Abraham's faith is renowned, Heb. xi. 17, and his fear of God approved, Gen. xxii. 12. And on the same ground David said, 'Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right,' Ps. cxix. 128.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction it doth plainly discover the great measure of our natural corruption, who judge many of God's ways unequal: Ezek. xviii. 25. 'Ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal.' And indeed, in one thing or other, wherein every carnal heart desires liberty to sin, we are like the evil servant, who in our thoughts charge the Lord to be a hard master, requiring more exact obedience than he should, Mat. xxv. 24; doth not every black-mouthed swearer and curser say in his heart, 'Our tongues are our own; we ought to speak: who is Lord over us?' Ps. xii. 4; and all profaners of the Lord's day say the like of the solemn sanctification of it, viz., it is a weariness, and they snuff at it, Mal. i. 13. And so they deal about the rest of God's holy commandments, in the transgression whereof their natural hearts desire carnal liberty, verifying the apostle's saying, Rom. viii. 7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God: it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.'

For admonition, to take special notice of the straightness of God's paths, as well to beat down our corruption, when we find in ourselves any untowardness and unwillingness to walk therein: and if we be wise for our souls, to know our own estate, even strong corruption, called a 'law in our members, warring against the law of our minds,' which is renewed grace, and 'leading us captive to the law of sin,' as Paul complaineth, Rom. vii. 23. And had we not need to fight against it by the sword of the

Spirit, the word of God, laying it to our souls by the hand of faith, and by humble earnest prayer, for the participation of God's power, to keep us in the straight ways of God, wherein is liberty, Ps. cxix. 45. For when the world and the flesh, by corruption, draw us out of these paths, we are taken captives, as Paul confesseth, and so lose our liberty. See also 2 Tim. ii. 26. As also to give all diligence to know the straight paths of the Lord, and to walk therein: this is the Lord's commandment, with comfortable encouragement so to do. Jer. vi. 16. 'Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' Luke xiii. 24. 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate; and walk in the strait way, that leadeth unto life,' Mat. vii. 13, 14. This was David's behaviour, as we may see by his prayer in this place, and many other before quoted. Consider the benefit of rest to the soul, and of pleasantness and peace to be found in these ways, Prov. iii. 17. And withal think on their fearful state and end that leave these straight ways of God: see Acts xiii. 10, they are 'enemies of righteousness, children of the devil,' and are 'taken captive by him at his will,' till they repent, 2 Tim. ii. 26; and if they hold on in their crooked paths, they shall never know peace, Isa. lix. 8. 'The Lord will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity,' Ps. cxxv. 5; even to the damnation of hell, Ps. ix. 7; Mat. vii. 23. For 'the man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead,' Prov. xxi. 16.

For comfort greatly to those that walk in God's ways, for they are ways of peace with God, and lead to glory eternally, Ps. cxix. 1, and cxxviii. 1; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

Secondly, Here observe the thing intended and expressed; David begs of God to lead him in a plain path; Ps. v. 8, 'Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness;' Ps. xxv. 5, 'Lead me in thy truth;' Ps. cxxxix. 24, 'Lead me in the way everlasting.'

This he doth upon the like grounds that he prayed to be taught the ways of God. As, first, upon the consideration of the inability of nature to walk at all in the straight paths of God; for we are dead in sins and trespasses, Eph. ii. 1, and of no strength, Rom. v. 6; and how can such walk? And though

God's holy calling to the state of grace gave him spiritual life, yet he had experience, and so conscience of his own weakness in grace, and the Lord were still with him to uphold and lead him. See Ps. xxx. 6-8, 'I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved. Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.' Ps. vi. 2, 'Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak.' Ps. xxxviii. 17, 21, 'I am ready to halt; forsake me not, O Lord.'

Secondly, David had knowledge of God's gracious property in becoming a guide unto his children, as Ps. lxxvii. 20, 'Thou leadest thy people like a flock.' Ps. lxxx. 1, 'Give ear, thou Shepherd of Israel, that leadest Joseph like a flock.' 'He led them with a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night,' Exod. xiii. 21; Ps. lxxviii. 14. Now, being in covenant, he lays claim to his favour, and begs it by prayer.

Thirdly, David prayeth to be led by God for his safety and security against his enemies; this reason is here rendered, 'Lead me in a plain path because of mine enemies;' for when God is for him he will not fear; what can man do unto him? Ps. cxviii. 6. When God leadeth him he will not fear, though he walk through the very valley of the shadow of death, Ps. xxiii. 2, 4.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction two ways: first, It lets us see the true ground of the perseverance of the godly in the state of grace; it is not in themselves, but in and from the Lord who is with them, and leads them in the way everlasting. He by his Spirit ministers daily supply of grace, and so keeps them from falling away; see 1 John ii. 20, 27; John xiv. 16, 17; 1 John iv. 4, 13. This Spirit gives sap and juice to the seed of grace, so as they cannot sin unto death, 1 John iii. 9; Jer. xxxii. 40; Ps. cxxv. 1, 2. These things we should mark, to arm ourselves against the uncomfortable doctrine of papists and Arminians, that say the true child of God may fall away from saving grace; but, John iv. 14, 'The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life;' and John x. 27, 28.

Secondly, David's practice shows the meekness of wisdom that is in those that be truly godly, not to trust in themselves, but humbly craving the Lord's

conduct and guiding in this world, to put all their trust in the Lord.

For admonition, it serves notably to move every one to labour to be such as God will lead and guide in the paths of life, for so shall they be sure to find rest for their souls, as Jer. vi. 16.

Now, that we may be such, we must be careful of four things: first, That we stand rightly in covenant with God, being indeed his people, and having him for our God: Dent. xxxii. 9-12, 'The Lord's portion is his people. He found him in a desert land, he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye: so the Lord alone did lead him.' When David hath the Lord for his shepherd, he assures himself he will lead him by the still waters, Ps. xxiii. 1-3. Secondly, We must be penitent persons, breaking off the course of sin, for God will not take the wicked by the hand, Job viii. 20; they that walk in darkness cannot have fellowship with God, 1 John i. 6. Thirdly, We must give diligent heed to the word of God, for that is God's counsel, whereby he guides his people unto glory, Ps. lxxxiii. 24.

Fourthly, We must daily beg this blessing of God, as David here doth, and in many other places, as is shewed before.

Because of *mine enemies*, David's reason of his two former petitions: therefore doth he desire of God to be taught his ways, and to be led in straight paths, because he had such enemies as continually sought his ruin and destruction, so that, if he were out of God's protection, they would soon work his destruction.

This reason may be considered two ways: first, Simply by itself, for the matter which it contains; secondly, With reference to the petitions which it doth enforce. In the reason simply considered this is here plainly taken for granted, that David had enemies, who both wished and sought his overthrow. This is plain in this psalm, ver. 2, 'His enemies and his foes came upon him to eat up his flesh;' and, ver. 12, they 'falsely accused him, and breathed out cruelty against him.' Whereto we may add, for fuller and plainer evidence, Ps. iii. 1, 'Lord, how are they increased that trouble me? Many are they that rise up against me;' Ps. lxxix. 4, 'They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of

mine head; they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are many.'

The reasons hereof, with the application in uses, are set down before, ver. 6, observation 1, briefly to this effect:

First, The good-will and pleasure of God thus to make David a type of Christ, of whom it is said, Isa. liii. 16, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him,' with Acts iv. 25, &c., alleging the second psalm true also of David the type.

Secondly, David's sins sometimes occasioned this evil, 2 Sam. xii. 9.

Thirdly, Corruptions in the wicked who had to do with David, stirred them up against him two ways: first, In hatred of his goodness, Ps. xxxviii. 19, 20, therein verifying Gen. iii. 17, whereupon our Saviour calls the scribes and pharisees serpents, and a generation of vipers, Mat. xxiii. 33. Secondly, In envy of his honour, Ps. iv. 2, and lxxii. 4; as Dan. vi. 3, 4.

By way of use it serves for instruction and admonition.

For instruction, see in David the state of the golly in this world, liable to the trouble and danger of many and cruel enemies: reason, as Luke xxiii. 31; and as Jer. xxv. 9.

For admonition, to beware of rash judgment, either against others, that they are naught, because they are by so many oppressed: for so we might condemn the golly, as Ps. lxxiii. 15; see Jer. xv. 10; or against ourselves, that we are forsaken of God because men persecute us, as Ps. xxii. 1. Indeed, we must consider the cause, and make use of persecution accordingly. Now the cause is either correction for sin or trial of grace. If we find our sins have brought enemies upon us, then we must humble ourselves under God's hand, who useth the rage of enemies as rods to whip his children, Isa. x. 5, 6. In this case he must smell the savour of a sacrifice, as 1 Sam. xxvi. 19: bring unto God a contrite and broken heart, that he will not despise, Ps. li. 17. If we find that God would make trial of grace in us by the enemies he doth raise up against us, then we must strive to give evidence of our faith in God by patient bearing the trial which his providence layeth on us, whereto we shall be enabled: first, By considering God's hand herein, for a sparrow

lighteth not on the ground without his will. Mat. x. 28, 29, 31. Thus David patiently bore Shimei his cursing, 2 Sam. xvi. 11, 12, with Ps. xxxix. 9; yea, thus Christ endured the cross and condemnation by Pilate, John xix. 10, 11. Secondly, By remembering the good end: for we shall come forth as the gold, Job xxiii. 10; 'Many are the afflictions of the godly, but the Lord delivers them out of all,' Ps. xxxiv. 19. Nay, hereby our glory shall be increased: Rom. viii. 18, 'The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us;' nay, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory:' for 'if we suffer, we shall also reign with him,' 2 Tim. ii. 12.

Thus Moses encouraged himself under the cross, with respect to the recompense of reward, Heb. xi. 25, 26; yea, our Saviour Christ, Heb. xii. 2, 'Who for the hope that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set at the right hand of the throne of God.' For he himself hereupon encouraged his disciples: Mat. v. 10-12, 'Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men revile you. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.'

Secondly, Consider this reason with reference to the two former petitions, which it enforceeth, and this is plain, that the opposition of David's enemies moves him to be more humble and earnest in prayer and supplication unto God. Their insurrection against him becomes his provocation to fly to God: Ps. lxxvii. 2, 'In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;' Ps. v. 8, 'Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies;' Ps. lxxix. 12-14, 'They that sat in the gate (that is, judges and magistrates) spake against me. But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord. Let me be delivered from them that hate me;' Ps. cix. 2-4, 'The mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me. They compassed me about with words of hatred: and fought against me without a cause. For my love they are mine adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.'

The reason hereof is threefold: first, The con-

sideration of God's hand in the opposition of his enemies, which ever hath an overruling power in all men's actions, Isa. xlv. 7; Amos iii. 6.

Secondly, Conscience of obedience to God, who requires to be sought in times of trouble, Ps. l. 15.

Thirdly, Confidence in God's help, grounded both on God's property and promise: for his property, he is the true God, that heareth prayer, Ps. lxxv. 2; 'He is our refuge and strength, a present help in trouble,' Ps. xlvi. 1. For his promise it is plain: Ps. xci. 15, 'He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him.'

This serves for instruction, reprehension, and admonition.

For instruction, we may see in David a notable property of the godly, which is, to seek help and safety from the Lord, when the wicked do eagerly labour for their destruction in the world.

Unto David's practice in this place join the behaviour of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 2-4, who sought the Lord in solemn prayer and fasting when Moab, Ammon, and mount Seir came against him in hostile manner. The like did Hezekiah upon the bloody railing of Sennacherib, both by Rabshakeh and by writing, Isa. xxxvii. 1, &c. Thus also did Mordecai and Esther, when Haman sought their utter ruin, Esther iv. 16. So did Christ's apostles for themselves, Acts iv. 21, 30, 31; and the church did so for Peter, Acts xii. 5.

For reproof, it makes justly to all natural wicked men, who in opposition against them by enemies do little regard this duty; as Joram said in the strait siege of Samaria, 'This evil cometh of the Lord: wherefore should I wait on the Lord any longer?' 2 Kings vi. 33, looking altogether to worldly and human help, as the wicked Jews sometimes did, who asked not at God's mouth, but would strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and trust in the shadow of Egypt, Isa. xxx. 2; yea, though they had been told the Lord would not have them to go down thither; saying, 'The strength of Pharaoh shall be your shame, and the shadow of Egypt your confusion:' yet, against the Lord's express revealed will, they would needs go thither; Jer. xlii. 14, 'But woe unto them, saith the Lord,' &c.; Isa. xxxi. 1, 2. Nay, 'Cursed be

the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm,' Jer. xvii. 5. When the heart is truly turned to the Lord, they will say, 'Ass-hur shall not save us: we will not ride upon horses: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy,' Hosea xiv. 3.

For admonition, it serves effectually to move every one to become followers of David. Let men's opposition against us be our provocations to seek the Lord: so shall we not only shew ourselves to be godly, but also reap good from that which our enemies intend to be hurtful unto us, which is a special favour, shewing that the Lord is with us, as he was with Joseph when his brethren sold him into Egypt; for God was with him, and turned it to his great honour and advancement, as Gen. xlv. 5, 7, 8, and l. 20; and as he was with his people in the wilderness, when Balak hired Balaam to curse them, but God turned it into a blessing, Num. xxiii. 8, 9, 11, and xxiv. 10. And for further encouragement hereto, we must meditate on the reasons that moved David so to do; for God's sovereignty is the same over our enemies and over us, that it was over David and his enemies. He may justly exercise us under such affliction as he did David, either for correction for sin, or trial of grace; and if we be in covenant with him, as David was, we have the like interest in his property and promise of help that David had; and if we put our trust in him, and call upon him, he will be likewise our defender and deliverer. Mark and apply his speech to Joshua, after Moses was dead, to give him encouragement in his place, Josh. i. 5-8, 'As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee;' which promise the apostle extends to every Christian, Heb. xiii. 5. Only let us look to the obedience which God requires of us in our places, as he did of Joshua in his, and then we shall with him prosper and have good success; for we fly to God by the prayer of faith, and the Lord is with us if we be with him, and then we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper: I will not fear what man can do unto me,' Heb. xiii. 6.

Ver. 12. *Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies; for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.*

A further petition of David unto God for mercy,

in regard of his enemies, enforced by a strong motive. The mercy he requires is, that God would not deliver him over to the will of his enemies: the motive he propounds, to move God to grant that request, is drawn from the behaviour of his enemies, whereof some stood up to witness falsehood against him, and some breathed out violent wrong or cruelty.

For the first, the word צָרָה, translated *enemies*, betokeneth such as by violent persecution seek to bring into an inevitable strait, as they do that besiege a place in war, according to the use of the word in Scripture, Deut. xxviii. 52, 'He shall besiege thee in all thy gates;' and ver. 55, 57—siege, and straitness, and distress, causing men and women to eat their own children, are there joined together in the threatening. Also the word, שָׁפַח, translated *will*, properly signifieth the *soul*, which is often put for will, lust, or desire, when those faculties or passions are eager, strong, and violent in men, as here they were in David's enemies after his ruin.

So as his meaning in this petition is this; in the words implying that he had such enemies as with all their hearts and souls most eagerly did desire to bring him into an inevitable strait, for utter ruin, he beseecheth the Lord that he would not give him into their hands, to have their souls satisfied with his destruction.

In this petition so understood note two things: first, The sacred trope, or rhetorical phrase, *metonymia subjecti*, which David here useth to express the insatiable desire of his enemies to work his overthrow, he calls it their very soul; as also Ps. xxxv. 25, 'Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, ah, our soul,' that is, our full desire, 'so we would have it;' and Ps. xli. 2, 'Thou wilt not deliver him to the soul of his enemy,' that is, to the will and desire, where we see he puts the soul, that is, the seat and subject, for the will and desire that is seated therein.

The reason whereof seems to be this, hereby to manifest more plainly the excessive measure of spite and malice which was in David's enemies, which seemed to him no less than if their very souls had been framed and composed thereof.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, three ways: first, It shews the lawful use of the art of rhetoric, if it be without vain affectation of wit and eloquence, even in the

dispensation of God's word; and withal the necessity of some competent knowledge therein, for right interpretation of the same.

Secondly, Here see, that men indued and guided by God's Holy Spirit, when they speak of corrupt affections in the souls of natural men, do not mince the matter with qualifying terms, to make them seem small things, of little or no danger, but do rather aggravate the same, by significant terms and phrases, which may plainly shew that sin therein is for measure exceeding great, and for danger damnable; why else should David style the malicious will and desire of his enemies by the very name of the soul itself? whose steps St Paul doth plainly follow. Speaking of the corruption of our nature, which divines do call concupiscence, that it may seem in measure fearful, he calleth it 'the old man,' and 'body of sin.' Rom. vi. 6; yea, a 'body of death,' Rom. vii. 24, having many and strong earthly members, as fornication, uncleanness, and the like, Col. iii. 5. And that it may seem strong and forcible, he ascribeth great power and might unto it in all natural men: Rom. vii. 5, 'When we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, had force in our members to bring forth fruit unto death;' it hath a kind of spiritual sovereignty in them, it reigneth unto death, Rom. v. 21, where mark, their sin's dominion is for the soul's damnation; the trouble and terror whereof in the godly is acknowledged by Paul in his own person: Rom. vii. 23. 'But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity unto the law of sin.' This terror, I say, that corruption causeth in the godly, may easily manifest how terrible the tyranny of it is in natural men. That blessed apostle cries out of his misery, by reason of this corruption yet dwelling in him, Rom. vii. 24, though then it had received in him a deadly wound by the power of Christ's death, effectually applied unto him by God's Holy Spirit at the time of his conversion. Oh what slavish bondage then are all natural men under, that have in their souls original corruption, the devil's task-master, to keep them close under the drudgery of sin, for which they shall receive the wages of eternal death!

Thirdly, This very phrase, rightly understood, gives plain evidence where corruption bears do-

minion; for look, where the motions of sin, for force and strength to bring forth evil actions, are as available as the soul is in the body for the effecting of natural actions, there undoubtedly sin reigneth, and corruption beareth sway. The soul we know gives life to the body, and sets every part a-work about those things it liketh, so as we may soundly argue, that he is indued with a reasonable soul who doth constantly manage his human affairs with good discretion; in like manner doth indred corruption quicken sinful motions in the soul, and, gaining consent of will, draweth the parts of the body to become the tools of the mind for the execution of sinful actions. Look, therefore, where we see a course held in the practice of sin, there we may be sure that corruption bears dominion; when the motions of sin hath force in their members to bring forth fruit unto death, then men are in the flesh, Rom. vii. 5. This reigning power of sin is 'the law of the members, warring against the law of the mind, and bringing man into captivity of the law of sin,' Rom. vii. 23.

This reigning corruption shews itself in man when his mind is set on evil works, Col. ii. 21, and he minds the things of the flesh, Rom. viii. 5; when his heart is fully set in him to do evil, Eccles. viii. 11; when his tongue proclaims his resolution for sin, as Jer. xlv. 17, 'We will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth out of our own mouth;' Ps. xii. 4, 'With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?' Isa. lvi. 12, 'Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink!' and when he cannot endure to be checked or crossed in his evil course. This cuts them to the heart, Acts vii. 54; stirs them up to rage and fury, as Acts vii. 57, 58; Gen. xix. 9; 1 Sam. xx. 30; whereby they plainly shew themselves to be brutish, Prov. xii. 1, and 'sensual, having not the Spirit,' Jude 19.

For admonition, it serves two ways: first, To observe in ourselves the force and strength of corruption, in sinful motions and desires after things forbidden of God; for if to enjoy them be our soul, as we would have it, as Ps. xxxv. 25; then certainly we are wholly carnal, sold under sin, and if we so die, we perish eternally; for where sin reigneth, it is unto death, Rom. v. 21. And that

we deceive not ourselves in a matter of so great importance, besides the evidence of this estate given in the last instruction, which is very plain, if we examine ourselves thereby, mark some other resemblances that give further illustration. St James, chap. i. 15, speaks of a strange conception in the soul, brought forth in life: 'When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.' Man's sin is the child born there spoken of; man's soul, as it is carnal, is the womb wherein it is conceived. The suggestion of Satan, with man's own evil concupiscence, are the seed whereof it is formed, and so far forth is man's sin begotten of the devil, and hath him for its father; as he is called 'the father of lies,' John viii. 44, for he put it into Judas's heart to betray his Master, John xiii. 2, and filled Ananias's heart that he lied unto God, Acts v. 3; and so became in them the father of those grievous sins,—treachery in Judas, and hypocrisy in Ananias. Now to try our estate for the dominion of sin by this resemblance; do we say of any sin, as Rachel did of natural children to Jacob, Gen. xxx. 1, 'Give me children, or else I die!' Doth lust make thee sick, as it did Amnon? 2 Sam. xiii. 1, 2. Dost thou, like the whorish woman, with an impudent face allure others to sin? Prov. vii. 13, 18. Is it pastime to thee to do wickedly? Prov. xviii. 23. Dost thou not sleep, except thou have done mischief? Prov. iv. 16. Dost thou devise iniquity and work evil upon thy bed; and when morning is light, dost thou practise it, because there is power in thine hand? &c., Micah ii. 1, &c. Upon all these and the like, the dominion of sin may be concluded; he that saith of evil-doing, 'Aha, my soul!' is as yet undoubtedly in his soul void of saving grace: Ps. xxxvi. 1, 'The transgression of the nugodly saith within my heart, there is no fear of God before his eyes.' This is likewise evident by the contrary affections in the godly, in whom grace is renewed; to get grace and to practise obedience is their soul; as Christ told his disciples, 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me,' John iv. 34. 'As the hart panteth after the water-brook, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God,' Ps. xlii. 1, 2. 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God,' Ps. lxxxiv. 2. The

word of God was to David as his soul; the soul, we know, quickeneth the body, and God's word quickened his soul, Ps. cxix. 50, 93. They were the joy and rejoicing of Jeremias's heart, chap. xv. 16. And Paul was as a woman with child, in travail after the conversion of others, Gal. iv. 10; his life was not dear unto him so he might further the gospel, Acts xx. 24. Mark these things, and pray for understanding.

Secondly, If we find that sinful affections be our soul, that is, our desire and delight, that then we give all diligence for change of estate; for who would continue in the gall of bitterness, and under the power of darkness, if he could help it? And though it be not in our own power, for it is 'a new creation,' 2 Cor. v. 17, and 'the first resurrection,' Rev. xx. 6; 'And who can bring a clean thing out of filthiness? not one,' Job xiv. 4; 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may they do good, that are accustomed to do evil,' Jer. xiii. 23. With man this change of himself is impossible, but 'with God all things are possible,' Mat. xix. 26; 'He can raise up children unto Abraham of stones,' Mat. iii. 9. And for his working of it the wise and powerful God of heaven hath ordained a way and means, and prescribed the use thereof to natural men, of the understanding whereof reason is capable. This means is the preaching of the word, sanctified by prayer for the blessing of the Spirit. The moral law will discover sin and the danger thereof to a natural man; for 'by the law comes the knowledge of sin,' Rom. iii. 20, and of the danger thereof, Gal. iii. 10; and by the gospel comes the knowledge of the remedy, for it is the word of his grace, Acts xx. 32, revealing mercy in Christ, John iii. 16, and shewing the way and means to be made partakers of him, John iii. 36. And in the use of these ordinances a natural man may exercise himself, and wait for God's blessing; he may hear and apply both the law and gospel, and pray for the blessing of God upon his endeavours. Husbandmen take pains for the precious fruits of the earth, and pray for the blessing of God upon their labour; and why may not natural men do so much for their souls? Surely the neglect of the use of means is, and will be, the condemnation of many, John iii. 19.

For in the means God willeth their gathering,



Mat. xxiii. 37; and our Saviour tells the Jews, 'They would not come unto him that they might have life,' John v. 40, saying, that 'the queen of the south should rise up in judgment against them,' for her pains to hear Solomon's wisdom, 'and yet a greater than Solomon was there,' Mat. xii. 42. Therefore wait on the means, as John v. 3-5. So did Cornelius fast and pray, Acts x. 3, then reverently hear Peter, ver. 33. The three thousand converted on the day of pentecost, Acts ii. 41, first heard Peter preach and apply the law, to the pricking of their hearts, ver. 26, 27, then they heard the gospel and gladly received it, and after continued in the apostle's doctrine, ver. 41, 42. He that had but one talent might have employed it, and is justly condemned for not so doing, Mat. xxv. 25, &c. The unbelieving Jews might have heard Paul and Barnabas preach, but they would not, but 'put away the word, and judged themselves unworthy of eternal life,' Acts xiii. 46.

The second thing to be noted in this petition is the favour and kindness which David craveth of God, namely, that he would not deliver him to the will of his enemies, so as they should have liberty to accomplish their bloody designs upon him: see Ps. xxxv. 19, 25, 'Let not them that are mine enemies rejoice over me. Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, ah, our soul.' Ps. xxxvi. 11, 'Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.' Ps. lxxi. 4, 'Deliver me, O my God, out of the hands of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.' Ps. cxl. 1, 4, 8, 'Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man. Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked. Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked.'

The reasons hereof are many: first, respecting himself; as the conscience of his sins that deserved this evil, to be delivered into the hands of his enemies; for so he knew God threatened to do with his own people, and had formerly performed it, Judges ii. 14, 15, 'The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers, and sold them into the hands of their enemies round about them. The hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as he had said, and sworn unto them.'

Secondly, In regard of his enemies; whom he knew, first, To be without conscience of dealing justly, and full fraught with all cruelty. This reason is rendered in this verse, 'For false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty;' ver. 2, 'They would swallow him up,' as Ps. lvi. 1, 2. For their strength and cruelty he resembles them to strong bulls of Bashan, Ps. xxii. 12; to ravening and roaring lions, ver. 13; and to dogs, ver. 16; Ps. lvii. 4, set on fire, 'Their teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword;' yea, Ps. cxl. 3, 'They have sharpened their tongue like a serpent; adder's poison is under their lips.' Secondly, He knew they would vaunt and boast of their triumph over him to God's dishonour, as Ps. xxxv. 19, 26, 'Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me; they rejoice at his hurt, and magnify themselves against him, saying, to his greatest grief, 'Where is now thy God?' Ps. xlii. 3, 10. Herein, no doubt, sacrificing to their net, praising their own power and policy, as the Philistines praised Dagon for the conquest of Samson, Judges xvi. 23.

Thirdly, In regard of God; knowing, first, That his power and providence over-ruled all: Ps. cxxxv. 6, 'Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.' If he speak the word, it is done, Ps. xxxiii. 9; 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain,' Ps. lxxv. 10; 'He shall cut off the spirit of princes,' ver. 12. He knew they would have no power over him but by God's permission, as John xix. 11. Secondly, That by his sovereignty he might so deal with his dearest servants, either for their trial, as he dealt with Job, or to give way to the wicked to fill up their sins in afflicting the golly, that so his justice and power may be glorified in their destruction: so he suffered Pharaoh to afflict his people in Egypt, Exod. ix. 16; Rom. ix. 17. Thirdly, That God having received him into covenant, stood bound to help him, as Ps. cxix. 94, and lxxxix. 3, 21, 22.

This serves for instruction and admonition.

For instruction three ways: first, See here what may be the estate of the golly, even of God's dearest children; they may be in the hand of their enemies, under the power of their distressors, plainly by the

bondage of Israel in Egypt, for a long time, Gen. xv. 13, with Exod. i. 9-11, 13, 14. The three servants of God were thus cast into the fiery furnace, Dan. iii. 20, 21; and Daniel himself into the lions' den, chap. vi. 16. Jeremiah felt this evil, chap. xxvi. 14: yea, Christ himself, by the wicked hands of the Jews, was taken, crucified, and slain, Acts ii. 23; which we are to mark, to prevent rash judgment, as well against others as also against ourselves in this case. A fault in which the godly themselves may fall, as well against others: Job iv. 7, 'Remember, I pray thee,' saith Eliphaz to Job, 'who ever perisheth, being innocent;' as also against themselves: Isa. xlix. 14, 'Sion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me;' Ps. xxii. 1, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' But if we mark every man's deserving by sin, and God's sovereignty over the best, it will stay our hearts and tongues from the sin of rash judgment.

Secondly, This petition shews that if the godly fall into the hands of the wicked, it is by God's permission and dispensation, for 'a sparrow lighteth not on the ground without the will of God,' Mat. x. 29; therefore Christ saith to Pilate, 'Thou wouldst have no power over me at all, except it were given thee from above,' John xix. 11; and the church saith unto God, 'Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; thou sellest thy people for nought,' Ps. xlv. 11, 12. Paul saith, 'I think that God hath set us forth the last apostles, as it were, appointed to death;' which is a thing very observable as the only ground of true patience, Ps. xxxix. 9, with 2 Sam. xvi. 10-12, and also of sweet comfort in the greatest persecution, 'For he hath said, I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee,' Heb. xiii. 5; Ps. xci. 15, 'I will be with him in trouble;' Ps. lxxvi. 10-12, 'Thou, O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou causest men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.' Mark the comfortable end of the troubles of the godly: as Job, xxiii. 10, 'He knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as the gold.' And so the story shews: Job xlii. 12, 'So God blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning.'

Thirdly, See here that prayer is a sanctified means to obtain of God safety and preservation from the hands of those that desire our hurt. Thus the Jews escaped from the bloody design of Haman, Esther iv. 16, 17, and vii. 3, 4, &c. Thus Jehoshaphat escaped in battle, when the captains of the chariots beset him about, 2 Chron. xviii. 31. And thus were he and his people preserved from three kings that came against him, 2 Chron. xx. 3, 4, &c. And thus was Hezekiah preserved from the great army of Sennacherib, Isa. xxxvii. 21, 33, 34. And no marvel; for as God requires the duty, so he hath made the promise, which he will perform, Ps. l. 15, and xci. 15.

For admonition, it serves effectually to stir up every child of God to become a follower of David in the performance of this duty, to be much and earnest with God in prayer for the preservation of himself and the church of God out of the hands of their enemies; a most needful duty in these evil times, wherein the enemies of God's church do band themselves, like Edom, Moab, Gebal, Ammon, Amalek, and the rest, Ps. lxxxiii. 3, 4, &c., to root out religion, to cut off God's people, that the name of Israel be no more in remembrance. Consider the good success of this duty, in this case, by the former examples; for it is not, as natural men do think, a vain thing to serve the Lord, and unprofitable to pray unto him, Mal. iii. 14; Job xxi. 15. Experience shews that this duty is prevalent with God, one of these three ways, at all times: either it prevents their attempts, as the former examples shew fully and plainly; or else it procures deliverance out of the enemy's hands, after some time of trial and correction by them; as it did for Peter, when he was kept in prison by Herod with purpose to put him to death, Acts xii. 5, 6, &c., and for Israel to procure their deliverance out of Egypt, Exod. ii. 23, 24; or, at least, it procures strength of grace to bear the violence and the cruelty of the enemy, though he proceed to inflict upon them most violent death, as we may see in Stephen, Acts vii. 59, 60; and in the saints of God that would not be delivered, that they might obtain a better resurrection, Heb. xi. 35. For, indeed, when the godly do sincerely perform this duty, 'though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed daily,' 2 Cor. iv. 16, and in death itself the child of God is more than conqueror,

Rom. viii. 37. Let us not therefore be weary of this duty; 'the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,' James v. 16. While Moses' hands were lifted up, Joshua prevailed; but when they were let down, Amalek prevailed, Exod. xvii. 11. God is much moved by prayer; it stays the wrath of God against his people, as Exod. xxxiii. 10, 11, &c.; Ps. evi. 23; Deut. ix. 18-20. And therefore, when God is resolved to bring a judgment, he forbids Jeremiah to pray for the Jews, Jer. vii. 16, xi. 14, and xiv. 11.

*Quest.* Is this all we have to do, to pray in time of danger?

*Ans.* No; we must likewise serve God's providence in the use of ordinary means, and withal use prayer for God's blessing thereon. So Moses did for Joshua, when he fought against Amalek; and Mordecai prayed for Esther, when she went unto Ahasuerus in the behalf of the Jews. And besides these, we must have due regard to our estate and behaviour when we perform this duty, and pray; and namely, first we must see that we stand rightly in covenant with God, and be his people, through faith in Christ; for then we have a promise of protection, as Ps. lxxxix. 3, 20-22, and of audience in time of trouble, 2 Chron. vii. 13, 14; which encouraged the church in adversity: Isa. lxi. 19, 'We are thine: thou never bearest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.' And Jeremiah herewith moveth God to mercy, chap. xiv. 8, 9, 'O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land? as a man that cannot save? yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.' Secondly, if we have failed by transgression (for 'in many things we sin all,' James ii.) then we must be careful to renew covenant with God, by renewing our repentance for our sins, and our faith in Christ Jesus. So did the Jews, and found help for deliverance, Judges x. 10, 15, 16; so did Jehoshaphat, and was preserved, 2 Chron. xx. 3, &c.

This renewing of repentance and faith is, for a Christian, with God as the sounding an alarm on the silver trumpets; was for the old Israelites, when they went out to war; it causeth remembrance before the Lord, that we may be saved from our enemies, Num. xi. 9. Lastly, We must make conscience of

new obedience, and do that which the Lord commandeth; then will he be an enemy to our enemies, and an adversary to our adversaries, Exod. xxiii. 22. If herein we approve ourselves the children of Abraham, we shall receive from God the blessing of Abraham; God will bless them that bless us, and curse them that curse us, Gen. xii. 3.

*For false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.*

The reason of David's former request, that he might not be delivered to the will of his enemies, drawn from their unconscionable behaviour and deadly hatred towards him. Their unconscionable behaviour; they rose up against him in false witness-bearing; their deadly hatred, in breathing out cruelty or violence.

Both which may be referred to the same persons; for a man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is as a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow, Prov. xxv. 18; all which are evidences of great violence. Yet because these two sentences are in the original in divers numbers, (for the latter is expressed in the singular number, 'He that breatheth out cruelty,') therefore, I take it, in the latter he pointeth out Saul himself, and in the former such as did falsely accuse him unto Saul; for David elsewhere pointeth out Saul by the term and phrase of a violent man: Ps. xviii. 48, 'Thou hast preserved me from the violent man;' and Ps. xli. 4, 'Preserve me from the violent man.' Here then we have to consider two grievous evils that befell David from his enemies: the first from Saul's flattering followers, the second from Saul himself.

For the first; false witnesses did rise up against David, such as without all conscience accused him of evils whereof he was not guilty: see Ps. xxxv. 11, 'False witnesses did rise up against me, they laid to my charge things that I knew not;' Ps. lvi. 5, 'Every day they wrest my words;' Ps. lvii. 4, 'My soul is among lions: I lie among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears, and their tongue a sharp sword;' Ps. lix. 7, 'Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips;' Ps. lxiv. 3, 'They whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.' Such a one was Cush the Benjamite, of whom he complains to God,

Ps. vii., see the title ; and such was Doeg the Edomite. Ps. lii., the title.

The reason hereof is twofold. First, God's divine providence disposing that, under this affliction of sustaining false accusations, David should be a type of Christ, who was thus wronged, Mat. xxvi. 59, 60.

Secondly, This proceeded from the dominion of corruption in David's enemies themselves; who, wanting the fear of God, as Ps. liv. 3, and hating David without a cause, Ps. lix. 3, 4, even because he followed goodness, Ps. xxxviii. 20, and knowing Saul desired to hear evil of David, as 1 Sam. xx. 7, 8, that he might have some colour at least to put him to death, to which purpose false witnesses served fitly, as 1 Kings xxi. 10, therefore to please Saul, and to procure David's hurt, did they thus bear false witness against him.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction: see in David's enemies into what fearful evils and horrible sins the corruption of nature will bring natural men, whom God doth leave to themselves, even to bear false witness against their neighbour, which is a most heinous and horrible sin, even against the light of nature, which teacheth that men should not do to others what they would not have done unto themselves; and the very heathen have most severely punished this sin. And the word of God accounts false witnesses to be the children of the devil; for who is meant by Belial, 2 Cor. vi. 15, but the devil? So the Syriac renders the word by Satan. Now false witness-bearers are the children of Belial, 1 Kings xx. 10; Prov. vi. 12, xvi. 17, and xix. 28; they do the lusts of the devil, John viii. 44, in a most horrible thing, even putting upon God the person of the devil, to be the patron of a lie.

For admonition, to wicked men that dare be bold upon such ungodly practices; consider the heinousness of this sin, as proper to the wicked, and the dreadful judgments it must needs bring upon them, being so dishonourable to God and abominable in his sight; see Prov. vi. 16, 19; Ps. lii. 4, 5, 'Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, and root thee out of the land of the living.'

For comfort to the godly that are thus wronged; it hath befallen better than thyself, Christ Jesus, David, Stephen, &c., see Luke xxiii. 31; and let the godly consider that the devil is the false accuser of the brethren, Rev. xii. 10. If they can find that they have repented truly, and do rest upon Christ for pardon, and walk in new obedience, they may rest assured of mercy upon God's promise, Prov. xxviii. 13; 1 John i. 9; and so prove the devil a false accuser in their consciences, as he was to Job, chap. xiii. 16. For when God hath pardoned sin, he doth not behold it, Num. xxiii. 21; 'His sin is covered,' Ps. xxxii. 1.

The second branch of the reason why David desires to be kept out of the hands of his enemies, is, because of their deadly hatred towards him. Saul, David's arch-enemy, breathed out violence against him: 1 Sam. xx. 31, 'Send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die;' therefore doth David so often style him by the name of 'the violent man,' Ps. cxl. 1, 4, and means him and his followers when he saith, 'Mine enemies hate me with hatred of violence,' Ps. xxv. 19. 'In heart you work wickedness; you weigh the violence of your hands in the earth,' Ps. lviii. 2. Magistrates should dispense justice and mercy, Ps. ci. 1, but Saul and his council became the tradesmen of violence: violence covered them as a garment, Ps. lxxiii. 6.

The reason hereof in Saul was twofold. First, Envy at David's honour; for when the women sang to his renown, 'Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands,' Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he eyed David from that day forward, and shortly after cast a javelin at him to kill him, 1 Sam. xviii. 7-11, plainly verifying that of Solomon, 'Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?' Prov. xxvii. 4.

Secondly, Ambition, an insatiable desire to enjoy the honour of the kingdom in his own person, and to leave the same to his posterity, which he feared would be crossed by David, and thereupon hates him to the death; so as he cannot endure his own son Jonathan, who spake in his behalf, but calls him the son of a perverse rebellious woman, who had chosen the son of Jesse, David, to his own confusion: 'For as long as the son of Jesse liveth on the

ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom; wherefore send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die,' 1 Sam. xx. 30, 31.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction two ways: first, Touching the state of the godly, that they are in this world liable to the deadly hatred of ungodly kings and governors—a grievous thing to God's poor servants, but too true, as with divine testimony plain instances will manifest. For testimony; Mat. x. 18, 'Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them;' Mat. xxiv. 9, 'They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.' For instance, consider the bondage of Israel under Pharaoh in Egypt, Exod. i. ii., and iii.; their seventy years' captivity in Babylon, Jer. xxv. 11; the bloody design of Haman for the destruction of all the Jews in the kingdom of Ahasuerus, Esther iii. 8-10, 13; the persecutions of the apostles by the Jews, Acts iv. 24-27; the persecutions of the apostles and other Christians by Herod, Acts xii. 1-4; and the ten most bloody persecutions by the heathen Roman emperors, recorded in the ecclesiastical stories.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, See in this violence of Saul against David an infallible sign of the dominion of malice and envy in the heart—namely, when the mouth doth breathe out violence; for 'of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh: an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil.' Mat. xii. 34, 35. Indeed, sometimes the godly may over-shoot themselves in words of violence, through sharp and sudden provocations, as Job and Jeremiah did when they cursed the time of their birth, Job iii. 3; Jer. xx. 14; therefore the dominion of malice by violent words must be judged, not by some particular acts, but by ordinary and continual course, as the apostle doth, Rom. iii. 9, 14, prove a man to be in the state of nature under sin, when 'his mouth is full of cursing and bitterness;' wherewith that of Solomon doth fitly accord, Prov. x. 11, saying, 'Violence covereth the mouth of the wicked;' and Prov. xvi. 29, 30, 'A violent man shutteth his eyes to devise froward things;

moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass;' like unto Saul, Acts ix. 1, who 'breathed out threatening against the church.'

For admonition, it serves two ways: first, To the godly, not to think it strange that the great ones of the world do frown upon them, for they may breathe out violence against them. They are by nature the seed of the serpent as well as others, and so continue till they be effectually called; and therefore no marvel though they shew enmity to the seed of the woman, and join with the old dragon in bitter persecution against the true members of the church, as Rev. xii. 17. It is wisdom therefore for the godly to prepare for it, by getting strength of grace to cleave fast to the Lord, in the strongest oppositions of the world; wherout our blessed Saviour directly aimeth, Luke xiv. 26, 27; John xvi. 33. And when their violence is breathing out against them, then to do as David did in like case—namely, for sure direction in acceptable carriage towards God and men to meditate in God's word: Ps. cxix. 23, 95, 'The wicked have waited for me to destroy me; but I will consider thy testimonies;' ver. 161, 'Princes have persecuted me without cause: but mine heart standeth in awe of thy word;' and for preservation and deliverance give themselves to prayer, as Ps. cxl. 1, &c.; Ps. xxxv. 1; Ps. lix. 1-3.

Secondly, This serves very profitably to all natural men, to warn them to consider their behaviour towards those whom they do not love; for if, like Saul toward David, they breathe out violence with their mouth, then no doubt, as it was in Saul, the hellish fire of rage and fury is kindled in their breast; which is a plain evidence that original corruption hath dominion in them—they are yet carnal, sold under sin, they are in the snare of the devil, held captive by him at his will, 2 Tim. ii. 26. And as in this particular case of envy and wrath, the dominion of corruption is discerned by the ordinary fruits of these corrupt affections, in bitter words and cruel deeds, so it may be in any other sin. Filthy speaking and wanton dalliance are plain flames of the fire of lust; when the mouth is full of cursing and swearing, the heart undoubtedly is full of corruption: such stinking breath argues un-sound lungs. Coal mines, that lie deep in the earth,

<sup>1</sup> Foxe, Acts and Monuments, tom. i.

do ordinarily discover themselves by black smuts in the outward face of the ground; and so doth the corruption of nature in the heart bewray its dominion in natural men by their ordinary practice of sin in life. Solomon makes the desire of sleep the smut of sluggishness, Prov. xxiv. 33; and keeping company with drunkards, seeking where the good liquor is, and sitting by it, the smuts of drunkenness, Prov. xxiii. 20, 30. So is oppression, hard dealing, lying, and deceiving for gain, the smut of covetousness, Micah ii. 2. A high look is a shrewd smut of a proud heart, Ps. ci. 5; and so is meddling with matters above our place, Ps. cxxxi. 1, and humouring those that may be means of our advancement—whether by flattery, with Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 2, 3, or by bribery, with the devil himself, that for the honour of homage from our Saviour Christ offers to give all the kingdoms of the world, Mat. iv. 8, 9. Let all simonists in the church, and bribers in the commonwealth, look towards their ghostly father; for like will to like, the briber to the devil. Now when, by these smuts of sin, they discern the black mine of corruption, then (unless they will be as the fuel of hell-fire) they must set themselves to seek a change of estate. This flesh and blood cannot effect, for 'the way of man is not in himself,' Jer. x. 23; man, accustomed to do evil, can no more do good than the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard her spots, Jer. xiii. 23. Yet with God this is possible, Mat. xix. 26; he can raise up children unto Abraham of stones, Mat. iii. 9. And this change he worketh by regeneration, whereby we are 'born again, not of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God,' John i. 13, even by his Spirit blessing the word unto our effectual calling into his holy mountain, his true church, where 'the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid,' &c., Isa. xi. 6, &c.; where most cruel and bloody minded men, as Saul was before his conversion, Acts ix. 1, shall lay aside their cruel nature, and live most lovingly and peaceably with the children of God, as Acts ix. 26, and xx. 24.

Now this holy calling is wrought by God, in the use of means ordinarily, even in the word preached: the law to discover sin, Rom. iii. 20, and the gospel to sow the seeds of grace, Acts xx. 24. Herein must we exercise ourselves, as Cornelius did, Acts

x. 33, and as Lydia did, Acts xvi. 14, and sanctify our endeavour therein by prayer to God for the blessing of his Spirit; for by prayer the Spirit is obtained, Luke xi. 13, of those that by repentance turn from sin, Prov. i. 23, and by new obedience endeavour to adorn the gospel of Christ, Acts v. 32. Thus waiting on the Lord, we may with comfort expect his blessing, as the poor impotent people did for their bodily cure at the pool of Bethesda, by the angel's moving of the water, John v. 1, &c.

Ver. 13. *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*

Ver. 14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.*

These two last verses contain the third and last part of the psalm, which is this: upon acknowledgment of the great benefit he received by believing, he doth notably encourage and stir up himself and others to wait still on God by faith. The acknowledgment of the great benefit of his believing on God's promise is, ver. 13, the encouragement to his own soul, and others also, by faith to wait on God, as in the last verse.

The sentence in the original, setting down the acknowledgment of the great benefit David had by believing, is for some words, though not in sense, defective and imperfect, (*aposiopesis*.) requiring some supply, which the scope and circumstances of the place do shew must be, either what his enemies would have done if he had not believed—namely, they had prevailed and overthrown him, and so some<sup>1</sup> supply the defect: or, what he himself should have done if he had not believed—namely, fainted and sunk under the burden of violent persecution, as Vatablus, whom our translations follow; for we must not leave out the word לָלֵךְ, *except*, as the papists<sup>2</sup> do, saying, It was left out by the Septuagint because it was of no great moment. Following, therefore, the supply, which is rightly made in our Bibles, the words bear this sense: as if he should have said, So great was my persecution that I had fainted, and so the enemy had prevailed against me, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord,—that is, to enjoy those good things, both temporal

<sup>1</sup> Junius and Piscator.

<sup>2</sup> Bellarm.

and spiritual, which the Lord hath promised me of his goodness and bounty. So the phrase is taken, Eccles. ii. 1, enjoy pleasure; in the Hebrew it is, see good; as also ver. 24, and chap. iii. 13, and v. 18. In the land of the living,—that is, in this world here on earth, where the living are; so, with the scope of the prophet here, the use of the phrase generally in Scripture doth shew it must be taken and understood, as shall be fully shewed afterward.

In the words thus understood note two things. First, The name or title which the Holy Ghost gives to this world. Secondly, That in this world God vouchsafes to impart his goodness unto the sons of men. Thirdly, That David for his part believed to enjoy God's goodness here on earth. Fourthly, That by believing he was upheld from fainting in himself, and from ruin by his enemies.

For the first; God by the mouth of David here calleth this world the land of the living. This habitable place of the earth, wherein men live a natural life, is the land of the living, in the style and phrase of the Holy Ghost; this is plain and certain by the ordinary use of this phrase in Scripture, see Job xxviii. 13. The place of wisdom 'is not found in the land of the living'—that is, among living men in this world; for it were absurd to say, the place of understanding were not to be found in heaven, seeing it is there said, 'God understandeth the way thereof,' ver. 23; see also Ps. lii. 5, David, foretelling the destruction of Doeg, saith, 'God shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living.'—not out of heaven, where he never was planted, nor grew, but of this world, where he grew, as a great tree, till God plucked him up, and rooted him out, by death and destruction. Isa. xxxviii. 11, 'I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living,'—that is, among the living here on earth; for who can imagine that Hezekiah meant he should not see the Lord in heaven? But here on earth the godly saw him in his ordinances, as Ps. lxxii. 2, and lxxviii. 25; and his meaning he further cleareth in the end of the verse, 'I shall behold men no more with the inhabitants of the world.' The same phrase in the same sense is used, Isa. liii. 8; Ezek. xxvi. 20, and xxxii. 23; Ps. cxvi. 9, and

cxlii. 2; Jer. xi. 9; and in the same sense is the like phrase taken, 'the light of the living,' Job xxxiii. 30; Ps. lvi. 13.

The reason why this habitable world is called the land of the living, is because God created it, and doth maintain and preserve it for man's habitation while he lives a natural life in this world: Ps. cxv. 16, 'The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; the earth hath he given to the children of men.' And opposeth hereto the place of the dead, calling it a 'land of darkness, and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness,' Job x. 22, 23; a 'land of forgetfulness,' Ps. lxxxviii. 12.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, see here plainly that it is an error and mistaking to take the land of the living for the kingdom of heaven, as generally the papists do, following herein the ancient fathers, who<sup>1</sup> many of them do so expound it. Which I do therefore note to shew how uncertain a rule it is to tie ourselves, for the right understanding of Scripture, to the exposition thereof made by the ancient fathers; for in very many things they differ in judgment one from another, as the learned do plainly shew.<sup>2</sup> And they themselves, in differences, do disclaim the authority of men, though never so learned, and send us to the Scripture: see August., Ep. 19; Iren., vi. Adversus Heres. cap. 63.

For admonition, that we consider God's providence over us herein, causing us to have our time in the land of the living, which we cannot deny to be a great favour, and therefore should endeavour to walk worthy of this blessing, which, after the example of Christ, is to work the works of him that sent us, John ix. 4. First, That we repent of our sins, Mat. iii. 2; Luke xiii. 3, 5. Secondly, That we believe on Jesus Christ, whom God hath sent to be our Saviour, John vi. 28. This God commandeth to all that would be saved, I John iii. 21, with v. 13. Thirdly, That we 'work out our salvation with fear and trembling,' Phil. ii. 12; which is then done, when, with reverence to God,

<sup>1</sup> Jerome in Ps. xxvi. August. in Ps. xxvi. Cassiodorus.

<sup>2</sup> Whitak. de Script. Interpret., Controv. I, quest. 5, cap. 8. Reynolds and Hart.

who worketh all grace, we do humbly and constantly exercise ourselves in the means thereof, ever making conscience of sin, till we 'receive the end of our faith, which is the salvation of our souls,' 1 Pet. i. 9.

The second point to be here observed is this, that in the land of the living,—that is, in this world,—God doth bountifully impart his goodness to the sons of men; this is here taken for granted, and elsewhere plainly affirmed: Ps. xxxiii. 5, 'The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.' Ps. cxix. 64, 'The earth is full of thy mercy.' Ps. cxlv. 9, 'The Lord is good to all;' even the brute creatures do daily taste of his bounty. Ps. civ. 27, 28, 'They all wait upon him; he gives them their meat in due season. That he giveth they gather: he openeth his hand, and they are filled with good.'

The reason hereof is twofold: first, Because in nature and essence he is goodness itself, love itself, and bounty itself, and so can no more detain his goodness from the creatures, than the sun can his light from the world when it is risen: and indeed by the exercise of goodness and bounty doth he manifest this essential property; as Ps. cxix. 68, 'Thou art good, and doest good.' James i. 17, by his good gifts and perfect givings he is seen to be the 'Father of lights.'

Secondly, By his free and abundant communication of goodness he binds every creature unto him, and man particularly to honour him; for even temporal benefits are his witnesses, that he from whom they come is the true God, and that he must be honoured for them, see Acts xiv. 17. Hereupon the godly do stir up themselves to due and daily thankfulness, as Ps. ciii. 1, 2, and cxvi. 12.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, two ways: first, This shews plainly that the true God is not known as he ought to be, no, not in this property of goodness. That which Pharaoh professed of himself without fear—Exod. v. 2, 'Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord'—is true of all natural men; for if they rightly knew this one property of goodness and bounty in the communication of blessings, their hearts would cleave unto him in an unfeigned desire to be his by covenant; for 'every man is a friend to him that

giveth gifts,' Prov. xix. 6. While they therefore say, 'Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?' Job xxi. 15, they shew themselves worse than the devil himself, who said, 'Doth Job serve God for nought? hast thou not made an hedge about him? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands,' Job i. 9, 10.

Secondly, This shews what manner of persons all those ought to be who call God Father,—namely, free and forward in doing good; so we shall resemble our heavenly Father, which is enjoined us, Mat. v. 44, 55. This was Christ Jesus's property while he was on earth, he 'went about doing good,' Acts x. 38; and it is commanded and commended to us all: Eph. v. 1, 'Be followers of God as dear children, and walk in love.' Heb. xiii. 16, 'To do good and to communicate forget not.'

For admonition, it serves three ways: first, In the want of any good thing to go to God by prayer, for he is the Father of lights, from whom all good cometh, and for the obtaining thereof, with the use of lawful means, join prayer to him that saith, 'Ask and ye shall have,' Mat. vii. 7. But withal we must look that we go not on in a course of sin, for that withholdeth good things, Jer. v. 25, and causeth God not to hear our prayers, Ps. lxxvi. 18.

Secondly, This must move us to labour to be such as shall surely partake of God's best blessings. For God is the great housekeeper, that makes provision for children, for servants; yea, for brute creatures, even for his very dogs. And answerable to his greatness in provision is his justice and wisdom in distribution; he gives not to all alike, but to every one his portion, and will not have children's bread given to dogs, Mat. xv. 26. Indeed, for temporal blessings he many times gives a larger portion to the wicked than to his children, as we may see by the outward state of Dives and Lazarus, Luke x. 19, 20, as great housekeepers will many times feast strangers more liberally than their own children. Yet God hath better things for his own than for the world, as Mat. iii. 11, 16. And the right way to partake of the best blessings is, first, in general to make sure we be in covenant with God through faith in Christ Jesus; for he that cometh unto God must believe, Heb. xi. 6; yea, believe in Christ, for 'he



is the way, the truth, and the life : no man cometh to the Father but by him.' John xiv. 6. Now, being thus in covenant, all is ours, whether 'things present or things to come,' 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22; we partake hereby of his fatness and sweetness, Rom. xi. 17, and God will prevent us with blessings of goodness, Ps. xxi. 3. In particular, to testify the truth of our faith, we must get and manifest the grace of love; for this is a sure companion of faith, Gal. v. 6, and a sure fruit of the same sanctifying Spirit, Gal. v. 22, and this entitles us unto God's best blessings; 1 Cor. ii. 9, 'What eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor heart conceived, hath God prepared for them that love him.' 1 John iii. 14, 'We know we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.'

Secondly, We must fear God with a filial fear, by the consideration of God's power and presence, seeking to bring our hearts to true conscience of eschewing evil, and doing good, wherein his grace is certainly made evident, as Job i. 8; Prov. xiv. 2; thus shall we be surely entitled to God's blessings; Ps. xxv. 12-14, 'What man is he that feareth the Lord? His soul shall lodge in goodness,' or dwell at ease, as it is translated. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.' Ps. xxxi. 19, 'O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, and wrought for them that trust in thee, even before the sons of men.'

Thirdly, We must walk in obedience in well-doing, according to the duties of our places, labouring in all things to keep a good conscience both towards God and men. Herein stands the power of godliness, which 'hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,' 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'No good thing shall be lacking to him that walketh uprightly,' Ps. lxxxiv. 11. 'What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it,' Ps. xxxiv. 12-14. Yea, to them that 'by continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, shall be eternal life; glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good,' Rom. ii. 7, 10.

Thirdly, When we enjoy any good we must re-

member whence it comes, and stir up ourselves to true thankfulness: 1 Thes. v. 18, 'In all things give thanks.' Ps. l. 23, 'He that offereth praise and thanks honoureth him.' Therefore we must with David study the art of thankfulness, as Ps. exvi. 12, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' and call upon our souls for the performance of this duty; as Ps. ciii. 1, 2, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul,' &c.; remembering the Samaritan, Luke xvii. 15, 19, who, upon his thanksgiving, was sent away with a better blessing for his soul than he obtained for his body by humble supplication.

For comfort, this makes greatly to all the godly in any want or distress; for surely their God is kind to the unkind, and in temporal blessings very liberal, even to the wicked, as we may see, Ps. lxxiii. 3-5, &c. The wicked have prosperity; there are no bands in their death, their strength is firm, &c., Ps. xvii. 14. They have their portion in this world; their bellies God filleth with his hid treasure. Now all they have are but effects and fruits of his common favour; what then do we think hath he in store for those whom he loves in Christ? Surely for them he hath a worthy dowry, as 1 Sam. i. 5. Consider Mat. vi. 26, &c., 'Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you much better than they?' &c. When a gentleman keepeth his dogs and his hogs fat and fair, shall we think he will suffer his children to starve for want of food and raiment? Nay, nay; though dear parents may sometimes prove unnatural, and a mother forget her sucking child, yet will not God forget his children, Isa. xlix. 15.

The third thing to be noted here is this: David believed that he should enjoy the goodness of the Lord in this world. Ps. exvi. 9, 10, 'I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I spoken;' and more plainly, Ps. xxiii. 1, 5, 6, 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not lack. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.'

The reason of this his persuasion was the goodness of God to David, both making promises of

these blessings unto David, and also enabling him by grace to rest and rely thereon, as he confesseth unto God: Ps. cxix. 40. 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.' The promises of God to David were twofold: first, General, which are good to all God's people that be truly in covenant with God, and make conscience of obedience; which are at large set down, Lev. xxvi. 3, 4, &c. to 14, and Deut. xxviii. 1, &c. to 15, and fully, though briefly, Ps. xxxiv. 9. 'There is no want to those that fear him.' Ps. xxxvii. 3. 'Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fel.' Secondly, More particular and personal, unto David himself alone, for the honour of the kingdom over Israel, assured by special promise, Ps. lxxxix. 20-22, and ratified by holy anointing, 1 Sam. xvi. 13, and for the building and blessing of his house, 1 Sam. vii. 11, 27.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, see here plain evidence of the great use and benefit of faith; it serves to entitle us, not only unto spiritual and heavenly blessings in Christ, but even to the good things of this world, in temporal blessings; as here David lays hold on God's goodness promised in this world. So did Noah by faith build the ark, for the saving of his household in the flood, Heb. xi. 7. So did Paul receive safety to himself, and those that sailed with him in his dangerous voyage, Acts xxvii. 24, 25. Thus Asa and his people received victory in time of battle, 2 Chron. xviii. 8; and Jehoshaphat's preservation from assault, 2 Chron. xx. 20. 'And what shall I more say? (saith the apostle;) for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, of Barak, of Samson, of Jephthah, of Sammel, David, and the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms,' &c., Heb. xi. 32-34. So as we may well say of faith, what the apostle doth of godliness, 1 Tim. iv. 8, that it is 'profitable for all things, and hath the promise of' all kind of blessings; for true faith is the prime grace of godliness to the sure entitling of us to the best blessings, as Gal. v. 6.

Here, indeed, every Christian must wisely and rightly consider the different nature of blessings promised, and according to the Lord's meaning, entitle themselves therunto. For some promises

concern blessings simply necessary to true happiness, as be justification and sanctification; other promises are made of blessings, both spiritual and temporal, which are very good and comfortable, but not simply necessary to salvation, as be peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and all degrees of spiritual graces, above that which shews the truth and life thereof, as abundance of knowledge, strong faith, fervent love, and the like; which high degrees of grace some have had, as Abraham, Rom. iv. 19, 20; the centurion, Luke vii. 9; and the woman of Canaan, Mat. xv. 28; whereas the disciples themselves were, for a good while, men of little faith, Mat. vi. 30, and xvi. 8, and the church of Philadelphia had a little strength, Rev. iii. 8.

Now the promises of blessings, simply necessary to true happiness, are made absolutely in Christ to true believers, without any other condition, as Acts xvi. 31; John iii. 16; but the promises of blessings, not simply necessary to salvation, must be understood to be made with the exception of the cross, which is this: that God, out of his sovereignty over his dearest children, may deny the accomplishment of these promises, either for correction, or prevention of sin, or trial of grace, which well considered prevents much perplexity and distress in soul to those that labour to walk honestly, and yet are more under the cross than some of God's children be, with whom they live.

For admonition, this serves notably to stir up every one to get true faith, for every one desires to enjoy God's goodness: 'Many say, Who will shew us any good?' Ps. iv. 6. Now the way is to get faith, which entitles us to all God's promises; and the right course herein is, to begin with the main promise in Christ, to get that faith in him which may entitle us to his righteousness, for in him we are restored to sanctified right in the creature, and in him all things are ours, 'things present and things to come,' 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. 'All the promises of God are in him, Yea, and in him Amen,' 2 Cor. i. 20. Therefore Christ himself bids his disciples, 'First seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and then all these things, pertaining to food and raiment, shall be ministered unto us,' Mat. vi. 33. 'For if God spared not his own Son, but gave him for us, how shall he not with him give us

all things also?' Rom. viii. 32. Now this true faith is never severed from true repentance nor new obedience; for by sight and sorrow for sin the way is prepared for Christ and his kingdom, Mal. iii. 1, and Mat. xxi. 32. And new obedience in eschewing evil and doing good is that behaviour which comes from love, a fruit of the Spirit, by which faith worketh, Gal. v. 6, 22.

The fourth and last point to be here observed is, the benefit which David received by believing God's word and promise. Hereby he was preserved from fainting in himself, and from being foiled by his enemies in their most violent opposition; for one or both of these evils he confesseth would have befallen him if he had not believed. See Ps. iii. 3, 6. 'Thou, Lord, art a buckler for me,'—there is his faith; 'I will not be afraid of ten thousand of the people, that have set themselves against me round about,'—there is his security from faith. Ps. lvii. 1, 3. 'My soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, till these calamities be overpast. He shall send from heaven, and save me,' &c.

The reason hereof is plain, for his faith entitled him to God's power and providence for protection and safety in time of danger, from whence sprang that courage which upheld him from fainting in the depth of distress; whereas, if he had wanted faith, he had indeed been out of covenant with God, and so void of title to God's power and providence, and so must needs have fainted when worldly power and refuge had wholly failed him. This David's enemies knew well; and therefore, thinking that God had forsaken him, they do thereupon encourage themselves to persecute him, with assurance to take him, Ps. lxxi. 11.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction two ways: first, It lets us plainly see the great evil of unbelief, for it takes away heart and courage in time of persecution. This we may see by Nabal, whose heart died within him when he heard of deadly danger already past, 1 Sam. xxv. 37; and in Saul, when the Philistines came upon him, he was sore troubled at the sight of that huge army, 1 Sam. xxviii. 5; and afterwards fainted when he heard, by the witch of Endor's means, the heavy tidings of his approaching ruin, ver. 20; and

the day following desperately fell upon his own sword when the Philistines pressed near unto him, 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. Hence Ahaz and his people's hearts were shaken as a leaf when they heard that Syria and Ephraim were conspired against him, Isa. vii. 2, at which time the Lord promised him mercy, but withal tells him of the hurt of unbelief: ver. 9, 'If ye will not believe, shall ye not be established!'

Secondly, Here again see the great benefit of faith, both for courage and comfort in time of danger; for 'the righteous is bold as a lion,' Prov. xxviii. 1, when 'the wicked fly, and no man pursueth;' and also for safety and deliverance, while it is a blessing to them, see Ps. xxxi. 19, 20, and xci. 1, 2, 9.

For admonition, it serves notably to move every one to get the grace of true faith, and to set the same a-working in the time of danger. This world is full of evils and troubles, as the sea is of storms and waves; now faith is as the stern that guides, and the anchor that holds fast, against the greatest blasts and billows, Heb. vi. 19; this entitles us to God's power and providence, which is like the pillar of a cloud by day, and fire by night, to guide and keep us, as it did Israel, Exod. xiii. 21, 22, and xiv. 19. This gave courage to the three children, Dan. iii. 16–18.

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Ver. 14. *Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.*

These words are the prophet's zealous exhortation and encouragement, both to his own soul and to others to wait on God and be of good courage, meaning in time of trouble and affliction. Unto which good duties he doth stir up himself and others by the benefit they shall receive thereby—viz., God will strengthen their hearts; and afterward repeats the first duty again, for waiting on God to shew the necessity of it. So that here in general we have to handle the duties propounded, and the reason to enforce them. The duties are two, both of them respecting our behaviour in time of affliction: first, To wait on God; secondly, To be of good courage.

For the first: To wait on God, is patiently to tarry the Lord's leisure for the things we desire, whether it be to be freed from evils, or made partakers of blessings, or both; though here the exhortation hath special conference to expectation of deliverance

from evils. So that the first thing we have here to note is this :

That every child of God who is under any evils of body or mind, or both, must stir up his heart to wait the Lord's good pleasure and leisure for deliverance : Ps. cxxx. 6, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord.' Luke xxi. 19, 'By your patience possess yourselves,' when you are betrayed by parents, kinsfolks, and friends ; now waiting on God is the holy art or work of patience, Rom. viii. 25. The examples of God's children professing the practice of this duty are many : as of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10, 'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.' Job, chap. xiv. 4, 'All the days of mine appointed time will I wait.' David, Ps. cxxx. 5, 6, 'I wait for the Lord, yea, my soul doth wait : my soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.' Yea, this is the practice of the church itself : Isa. xxv. 9, 'It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God ; we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for him ;' all which are an excellent cloud of faithful witnesses, shewing plainly that the duty is required of God, and that the performance of it is acceptable in his sight.

The reasons hereof are plain. First, All afflictions come by God's disposing and ruling providence : as Isa. xlv. 7, 'I create peace and evil.' Amos iii. 6, 'Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it ?' And the removing of them is his doing also ; for he doth heal and bind up, as well as tear and smite, Hosea vi. 2 ; Jer. xxxiii. 6. Therefore it is wisdom to go to him that smiteth, and to wait upon him for help.

Secondly, Waiting on God is a work of faith, Isa. xxxviii. 16, and ascribes unto God the honour of the blessing we wait for ; whereas refusing to wait on God betrays an evil heart of unbelief, as 2 Kings vi. 33, 'Wherefore should I wait on the Lord any longer ?'

Thirdly, By waiting on God we are surely entitled to singular benefits : Lam. iii. 25, 'The Lord is good unto them that wait for him.' See this his goodness in sundry particular blessings : first, They shall inherit the earth—that is, every good and comfortable blessing in this world, Ps. xxxvii. 9 ; secondly, God will save them from their enemies, Prov. xx. 22 ; thirdly, He heareth their cry and prayer, Ps.

xl. 1 ; fourthly, They shall never be ashamed, Ps. xxv. 3 ; Isa. xlix. 23 ; fifthly, They shall renew their strength, chap. xl. 30 ; sixthly, God prepareth for them blessings spiritual in Christ, which surpass the conceit and reach of man, chap. lxiv. 4.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction it may well inform us to conceive what is likely to be our estate in this world in regard of troubles—namely, seeing we must wait upon God for deliverance from them, it seems he would have us to resolve, they may be our portion here on earth. When an earthly king enjoins all his subjects to prepare arms and be in readiness, they will easily conceive they shall have wars. And thus deals the Lord with his children ; he bids them wait upon him for deliverance from troubles when they come. Now patient waiting is the act of hope in God for his help, which is one part of defensive armour in time of trouble, as Luke xxi. 19, 'By your patience possess your souls ;' Eph. vi. 15, 'And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,' which needed not but for afflictions, which are plainly foretold, John xvi. 33 ; Acts xiv. 22 ; 2 Tim. ii. 12, and preparation for them enjoined, Luke xiv. 26, 27, amplified there by two resemblances, ver. 28, &c.

For admonition, it serves effectually to stir up every godly man to make sure he be indued with those graces, and give himself to that behaviour which may enable him with patience to wait on the Lord in the time of affliction. Every good husband is provident in summer to make provision for winter ; and shall not Christians be wise for their souls in the like ? The sure way to Christian patience is this :

First, To break off the course of every sin by true repentance, for the guilt of sin takes away peace of conscience unless it be seared ; and they that are in that estate and ease are 'like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast out mire and dirt,' Isa. lvii. 20, who can rightly wait on God for nothing but judgments, for while they go on in sin they have no title to mercy ; and therefore it is said the hope of the ungodly shall perish, Prov. x. 28, it shall be like the giving up of the ghost, Job xi. 20 ; but if they repent, putting iniquity far away, as chap. xi. 14, then there is hope, ver. 18.

Secondly, They must believe in God through Christ; for thus they are justified and have peace with God, Rom. v. 1; and this faith is the ground of things hoped for, Heb. xi. 1, and when it is tried in affliction it bringeth forth patience, James i. 3, the perfect work whereof is this waiting on God here enjoined.

Thirdly, They must fear God, by remembering his hand and providence in these evils that lie upon them; for a sparrow lights not on the ground without his will, Mat. x. 29. This will check and suppress both repining and grudging towards God, as Luke xxiii. 34, 49, and envy and desire of revenge against men, and give us hope of a comfortable end. Prov. xxiii. 17, 18, 'Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.'

Fourthly, They must walk in obedience: Ps. xxxvii. 34, 'Wait on the Lord and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the earth.'

*Be of good courage.*

The second duty wheremto David stirs up himself and others in the time of affliction—namely, they must not suffer themselves to be daunted, dismayed, or faint-hearted, but stir up themselves, encourage their hearts, and keep fast the confidence of their hope even in the depth of distress; this is the meaning. Mark, then, God's children must not suffer themselves to be dismayed or daunted in time of affliction, but cheer up their hearts and encourage themselves in the Lord their God: see Ps. xxxi. 24, 'Be of good courage;' Isa. xxxv. 3, 'Strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees,' 1 Peter iii. 4, not being dismayed with any terror; even as David did when his own men would have stoned him—he 'encouraged himself in the Lord his God,' 1 Sam. xxx. 6; and this is the meaning of the apostle's charge, 1 Cor. xvi. 3, 'Stand fast in the faith; quit you like men: be strong.'

The reasons hereof are plain, and of great importance.

First, To be fearful and faint-hearted in affliction comes either from the want, or at least from the weakness of grace, even of that most excellent and needful grace of faith. As Solomon saith, 'If thou be faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is

small,' Prov. xxiv. 10—even thy faith; as Christ told his disciples in a great storm upon the sea, Mat. viii. 26, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith!'

Now there is great danger herein, for hence comes apostasy in religion, when men withdraw themselves for fear of persecution. In those the Lord's soul takes no pleasure; such drawing back is unto perdition, Heb. x. 38, 39, and such fearful ones are set in the first rank of those that must be cast into the burning lake, Rev. xxi. 8.

Secondly, God's children must do as much for God's glory in a good cause, as wicked men do to his dishonour in that which is evil. Now they encourage themselves in an evil matter, Ps. lxxv. 5, and hearten one another to do wickedly: Isa. xli. 6, 7, 'They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith,' &c., about their idols. Say thou therefore with Nehemiah, 'Should such a man as I fly?' chap. vi. 11. Remember that the Spirit of glory, and of God, is glorified when we shew courage in suffering for a good cause, 1 Pet. iv. 14. Yea, and our weak brethren are much heartened by our example: as Phil. i. 14, 'Many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear;' whereto old Eleazar had great respect in his sufferings, 2 Maccab. vi. 18, 24, 25.

Thirdly, Courage is needful under afflictions in respect of the reward, which, not of our merit, but of God's bounty, is no less than a kingdom, even the kingdom of heaven and the crown of life; see 2 Thes. i. 4, 5, Paul tells the Thessalonians, that through faith and patience in suffering they shall be counted worthy the kingdom of God: and 2 Tim. ii. 12, 'If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.' Rev. ii. 10, 'Be thou faithful unto the end, and I will give thee the crown of life.' Now what courage will men shew for earthly kingdoms! and what will they not endure to get them! And much more should we do so for that kingdom which is undefiled, immortal, and fadeth not away, reserved in heaven, 1 Pet. 1, 4.

Fourthly, God is with them that suffer for well-doing; and if they be courageous for his glory he will strengthen their hearts, as it followeth in this verse, Ps. xci. 15, 'I will be with him in trouble.'

Herewith he encouraged Paul at Corinth, Acts xviii. 9, 10; and David herewith did notably encourage himself, Ps. cxviii. 6, 'The Lord is on my side; I will not fear.' See Rom. viii. 31, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' Thus the angel encouraged Gideon, Judges vi. 12; Jeremiah encouraged himself, chap. xx. 11; God encourageth his people, Isa. xxxv. 4, and xli. 10.

This serves for instruction and admonition.

For instruction, it shews what manner of persons the professors of true religion ought to be, for truth and strength of grace—namely, not babes or children, but men of stature and courage in Christ Jesus, even perfect men, Eph. iv. 13, 14. (Children are so fearful, and not fit for war; but Christians must fight the Lord's battles against spiritual enemies, Eph. vi. 12, and 'endure hardness, as good soldiers,' 2 Tim. ii. 3. Few do think on these things, but the most content themselves with the shews of godliness, and want the powers thereof, 2 Tim. ii. 5; but 'wisdom is justified of her children,' Mat. xi. 9.

For admonition, according to this charge, every one should give all diligence to get this spiritual courage into their hearts, which will enable them to wait upon the Lord in times of distress.

The way hereto is to make sure of two things: first, That the state of our persons towards God be good; secondly, That our godly behaviour express the same. That the state of our persons may be good before God three things are required: repentance, faith, and sanctification. Repentance is that grace of God, whereby we, considering our own ways in our hearts, do humbly confess our wicked ways unto God, and praying for mercy and pardon, do forsake the sins wherein we have lived. And this is needful unto true courage, because the guilt of every sin brings fearfulness: as Gen. iii. 8, 10; Dent. xxviii. 66, 'Thou shalt fear day and night;' Prov. xxviii. 1, 'The wicked fly when none pursueth;' 'Neither shall any man strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life,' Ezek. vii. 13. Faith is that grace of God's Spirit whereby we rest and rely on God's mercy in Christ's merits, for justification and salvation: hereby we are justified, and be at peace with God, Rom. v. 1; and 'the righteous are bold as a lion,' Prov. xxviii. 1. Hereby we are in Christ the Son of God, Gal. ii. 20;

and in him we shall be strong and courageous, as Eph. vi. 10; Phil. iv. 3.

Thirdly, Sanctification is the work of the Spirit, abolishing corruption, and renewing grace more and more every day. Now they that are in this estate have the Spirit dwelling in them, Rom. viii. 11; which is the spirit of strength, Isa. xi. 2; the spirit of power, and of a sound mind, 2 Tim. i. 7. These graces bring quietness and confidence, which are the strength of the godly, Isa. xxx. 19.

The godly behaviour needful to true spiritual courage is threefold: first, To make sure our trouble be for a good cause: for 'if we suffer for righteousness' sake, we need not be afraid for any terror,' 1 Pet. iii. 14. 'Let none of you suffer as an evil doer: but if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed,' 1 Pet. iv. 15, 16. So the Jews strengthened their hands for the good work, Neh. ii. 18. Secondly, We must store our hearts with the word of God, both for direction in carriage and consolation in distress. So did David, Ps. cxix. 11, hide God's sayings in his heart, and hereby kept himself from the paths of the destroyer, Ps. xvii. 4; 'This is my comfort in mine affliction; for thy word hath quickened me,' Ps. cxix. 50. And in particular, know God is present with us, Dent. xxxi. 6; 1 Chron. xxviii. 20; 2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8; Haggai ii. 4. Thirdly, Beside all the former, we must ever join humble and earnest prayer for strength and courage from God: as Neh. vi. 9, 'They made us afraid. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hand;' Acts iv. 29, 'Now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.'

*And he shall strengthen thine heart.* The reason whereby the prophet doth encourage himself and his godly brethren to the former duties of waiting upon God, and being of good courage in the time of affliction, drawn from the great benefit they shall reap hereby—namely, God will strengthen their hearts: he will put strength and courage into them, and make them resolute, or steadfastly minded, as this phrase is translated, Ruth i. 18, and able to hold out until they have a blessed issue.

Mark then, they that wait on the Lord, and encourage themselves so to do, in the times of

affliction, shall have the Lord in mercy to put strength into them, for their better enabling to wait on him; Ps. xxxi. 24, 'Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.' This David found to be true by good experience: Ps. xl. 1, 2, 'I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me—and established my goings;' according to the Lord's promise, Isa. xl. 30, 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.'

The reason hereof is plain: first, To wait on the Lord, and to encourage ourselves in affliction, are notable actions of faith, as is shewed before. Now the grace of faith doth surely entitle us to the participation of God's power: 2 Chron. xx. 20, 'Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established.'

Secondly, In waiting on the Lord, and encouraging ourselves in time of affliction, are the right improving and employing of the talents which the Lord hath left with us, for in so doing we set faith a-work. And this behaviour hath title to increase, for 'to every one that hath it shall be given,' Mat. xxv. 28, 29. It is said of Paul that he increased in strength, Acts ix. 22, and the way and means thereof is shewed by himself: 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'I laboured more abundantly than they all.'

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, two ways: first, See here plainly that God's gracious gifts and works in our hearts are vouchsafed, though not for, yet in and upon our endeavour, in obedience to his will, in the use of those means wherein he is pleased to work the same; as here, increase of strength from God is promised upon our obedience in waiting on the Lord, and encouraging our hearts so to do: so Isa. lv. 3, 'Hear, and your soul shall live;' for 'faith comes by hearing,' Rom. x. 17; and 'he that believeth in me,' saith our Saviour, 'shall never die,' John xi. 26. A most needful point, worthy of all observation, because the corruption of nature is such that we willingly yield to the contrary conceit, which is, to hope for good from God, though we neglect the means wherein God is pleased to work the same, and therein separate the means from the end: as the Jews looked to have eternal life in the word, and yet would not search to find therein what it testified of Christ, John v. 39; they would have

life, but they would not come to Christ to have it in him, ver. 40. As, on the other side, we easily persuade ourselves we shall escape damnation, though we make hold upon sin, the meritorious cause thereof, to live therein.

Secondly, Here see the true fountain of all that courage and boldness which in all ages God's children have shewed for God's glory and for the maintenance of his truth, even to the amazement of their adversaries: as in David against Goliath, 1 Sam. xvi. 32, 34; Ps. iii. 6, and xxxiii. 4; in the three servants of God before Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iii. 16, 17; in the apostles before the rulers of the Jews, Acts iii. 13; and in many thousand martyrs before their persecutors, whereof the ecclesiastical histories give plentiful testimony. Surely they had it from the true God, who did strengthen their hearts; and this the godly have confessed, as David often, calling the Lord his strength, as Ps. xviii. 1, 2, and cxliv. 1; and Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 17, 'The Lord stood with me and strengthened me.'

For admonition, it serves, first, To observe the ways and means whereby God doth strengthen the hearts of his children, that so we may therein wait upon God in the day of affliction, for increase of strength and courage in our souls. God's ways for this end are of two sorts: some extraordinary, as the touch of Christ's hand vouchsafed to Daniel, chap. x. 10, 16, 18; and the laying on of his right hand, vouchsafed to John, Rev. i. 17. Others are ordinary, and that of two sorts, outward and inward. God's ordinary outward ways of strengthening the heart are four.

First, and chiefly, His word spoken, either by God himself, as Joshua i. 6, 7, 9; or by his servants in the ministry thereof, as Heb. xii. 12, 'Lift up the hands that hang down;' Isa. xl. 1, 2, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people; speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem.' Hence David saith, 'This is my comfort in mine affliction, for thy word hath quickened me,' Ps. cxix. 50; and Jer. xv. 16, 'Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.' A good weapon in a man's hand puts courage in his heart against an enemy: now God's word is the sword of the Spirit, Eph. vi. 17; yea, the sword of God's mouth, Rev. ii. 16; nay, sharper than any two-edged sword, Heb. iv. 12.

Secondly, The works of his providence, wherein we have had experience of his goodness in former deliverances. Thus David's heart was strengthened to encounter with Goliath, by the experience of God's power and providence, in killing the lion and the bear, 1 Sam. xvii. 34-37; yea, the remembrance of God's power and mercy unto others in like case, puts life and courage into the hearts of God's children in distress: Ps. xxii. 4, 5, 'Our fathers trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered.' Here thou mayest say as Elisha did, at the waters of Jordan, 'Where is the God of Elijah?' 2 Kings ii. 14.

Thirdly, The company of the godly puts courage into the distressed, Acts xxviii. 15. When Paul saw the brethren in his dangerous voyage, he 'thanked God, and took courage:' Prov. xxvii. 9, 17, 'Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel. Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.'

Fourthly and lastly, Prayer to God, as well by ourselves, as by others in our behalf. Thus the apostles sought courage and boldness when they were threatened by the rulers of the Jews, Acts iv. 24, 29; and Paul, for this end, entreated the Ephesians to pray for him, Eph. vi. 19.

God's inward way of strengthening the heart is by the work of his Spirit; for that is the comforter, John xiv. 16, 17, and the Spirit of strength, Isa. xi. 2, of power and of a sound mind, 2 Tim. i. 7.

By the assurance of the abode of this Spirit among them, the Lord encourageth Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the people, Haggai ii. 4, 5.

Now these being some of God's special ways whereby he strengtheneth the hearts of his children, we must stir up ourselves to wait for his work of mercy, for the strengthening of our hearts when terror and fears take hold upon us.

Secondly, We must labour to be such, both in state of soul and behaviour of life, as to whom God will vouchsafe the blessing of strength of heart in evil times. This requires (besides the duties here named, of waiting upon God and encouraging our hearts in evil times,) that beforehand in the days of peace, first, We beware of sin, and break off the course thereof by true repentance; for guilt of sin

brings a trembling heart and great astonishment, as Deut. xxviii. 65, 66; even fear, where no fear is, Ps. liii. 5; it makes the heart to fail, Luke xxi. 26.

Secondly, That we are truly in covenant with God, not only receiving the seals thereof for outward admittance and assurance, as baptism and the Lord's supper, but humbly receiving and obeying the word of the covenant, Christ's holy gospel; which when we do, the Lord will say, 'Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness,' Isa. xli. 10.

Thirdly, That by faith we rest and rely upon God's mercy in Christ Jesus. This is the ground of hope whereby we wait on God, which hath the promise of being strengthened; as when it is said, that by faith some 'of weak were made strong,' Heb. xi. 34, as Abraham was 'strong in the faith,' Rom. iv. 20. This faith unites us unto God in Christ. Gal. ii. 20, and God's promise is to strengthen such in the Lord, Zech. x. 12.

Fourthly, That we be upright-hearted towards God, for the Lord makes himself strong for such, 2 Chron. xvi. 9. This we may see by his promise and dealing with David, who was upright before him, Ps. xviii. 23, and God's hand was established with him; his arm did strengthen him, Ps. lxxxix. 21.

The fourth and last point here to be noted is, the repetition of the first duty here prescribed, 'Wait, I say, on the Lord;' that is, even after the Lord hath strengthened thine heart, yet wait still on God, and abide his leisure for thy full deliverance.

The like repetition we may see in the same case: James v. 7, 8, 'Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth near.'

The reason of such repetitions is to shew the necessity of this duty, of waiting upon God in the time of afflictions; for tribulations are like to continue to the godly in this world, as Christ told his disciples, John xvi. 33, in regard of the malice of the devil and his instruments, who, being the seed of the serpent, do bear continual enmity to the godly, which



are the seed of the woman. The wicked ordinarily are many and mighty, as David complaineth, Ps. lxxix. 4, 'They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty.' So as the godly had need, with the same prophet, to say and do, as Ps. lix. 9, 'Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence.'

This serves to justify a profitable ministerial practice, in the zealous pressing of needful duties by often repetition. Many have itching ears, ever desirous to hear novelties; like the Athenians, who 'spent the time in nothing else but to tell or hear some new thing,' Acts xvii. 21. But 'wisdom is justified of her children.' They that mind to be Christ's disciples, are desirous to hear needful things again and again; as John ix. 27, 'Wherefore would you hear it again and again? will ye also be his disciples?' Acts xiii. 42, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached unto them the next Sabbath. For which purpose Paul saith, 'To write to you the same things is not indeed grievous to me, but for you it is safe,' Phil. iii. 1; as his often

practice of it plainly shews; in the same chapter, ver. 18, 'Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.' Gal. i. 8, 9, 'Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach unto you any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.' And our blessed Saviour, about material duties, took the same course, as we may see in his often-repeated woes against the scribes and pharisees, Mat. xxiii. 13-16, &c., and his pressing the duty of watching on his disciples by this often repetition: Mark xiii. 33, 'Take ye heed: watch and pray;' ver. 35, 'Watch ye therefore;' ver. 37, 'What I say unto you, I say unto all men, Watch.'

Secondly, This repetition of the duty, shewing the importance of it, must stir up our diligence in the constant and conscionable use of such means as God hath ordained for the attaining of this virtue; which way and means is plainly prescribed in the use of admonition, where this duty is handled in the beginning of the verse.

ΤΩ ΘΕΩ ΔΟΞΑ.

# DAVID'S HEART'S DESIRE;

OR,

## AN EXPOSITION OF PSALM LXXXIV.



PSALM LXXXIV. *To the chief musician upon Gittith. A psalm for the sons of Korah.*

This psalm may not unfitly be called David's heart's desire: for though his name be not prefixed, as it is to sundry others, yet the matter of it being well weighed, doth most fitly accord to his troublesome estate under persecution, whereby he was debarred from safe access to the place of God's solemn and public service, and most fully express his heart's desire after the house of God, which was in him both frequent and unfeigned, Ps. xxvii. 4; in regard of the blessings there to be enjoyed, Ps. lxxv. 4, which is matter profitable for God's children; for that which, being denied, will prove the heart's desire, should, being enjoyed, become the heart's delight; and that is the pure and holy public worship of God.

In the handling of this psalm we have, first, The dedication of it, in the title prefixed; then the psalm itself.

The dedication was to 'the chief musician,' or master of the choir: for 1 Chron. xvi. 4, David ordered a choir to sing thanksgiving, and penned psalms for that end, which he delivered to the master of the choir, ver. 7. Of their ordering, see 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 7.

*Upon Gittith.* Three psalms hath this word *Gittith* in the title, viz., viii., lxxxii., lxxxiv., the meaning whereof is difficult, being much controverted amongst interpreters. The Septuagint reads it, ὑπὲρ τῶν λαλῶν, *pro locutaribus*; which the ancients<sup>1</sup> allegorising, expound of particular churches, where Christ is

<sup>1</sup> Euthymius, August. in Ps. viii.

the vine, believers are branches, and faith and other graces are grapes, which yield that wine which cheereth God and man, Judges ix. 13.

Others following the LXXII., yet refer it to the time of vintage thus celebrated.

The Chaldee paraphrast takes it for a musical instrument, which David brought from Gath, where he remained in his exile from Saul with King Achish.

Rabbi David Kimhi takes it to note and signify that this psalm was penned by David in the foresaid Gath.

Also a city of the Levites was called Gath-Rimmon, Joshua xxi. 25, whereon Obed-Edom the Levite is called the Gittite, 2 Sam. vi. 10; and so by Gittith here may be meant, either such instruments as was used by Obed-Edom's posterity, the Gittite, or that these psalms were made upon occasion of transporting the ark from Kirjath-Jearim to Jerusalem—namely, the 8th, when it was brought to the house of Obed-Edom; the 81st, upon the death of Uzzah; the 84th, when it was brought to Zion.

It is most probable it was a musical instrument. The less to be stood upon, because this music was typical, and in their time the instruments of God, 1 Chron. xvi. 42, but now, as John iv. 21, 23, 'Ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father: but the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth;' 'Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,' Eph. v. 19.

*For the sons of Korah.*

These sons of Korah were the posterity of that rebellious Levite, who with Dathan and Abiram rebelled against Moses and Aaron, Num. xvi., which Korah was consumed with fire, ver. 35, with 17. Howbeit there were of his sons that died not, Num. xxvi. 11, departing, as it seemeth, from their father's tent, as all were commanded, Num. xvi. 24, 26; and of these is numbered a family of the Korathites, chap. xxvi. 58, of whom came Samuel the prophet, and Heman his nephew, 1 Chron. vi. 33, a great singer, chap. xxv. 4, 5.

In this dedication note two things: first, King David's employment in troublesome times; he composed and penned psalms of special purpose for the public worship and service of God, 1 Chron. xvi. 7. The dedication of sundry psalms to the chief musician shews the same.

The reason hereof was his holy zeal for God's glory, Ps. lxi. 9, and fervent desire thus to testify his thankfulness to God, that had highly advanced him, Ps. lxxviii. 71, 72. Therefore he argues the matter with his own heart, that he may do it effectually, Ps. cxvi. 12.

*Use 1.* Here see that neither dignity nor distress should exempt men from the zealous pursuit of God's holy worship. If either one or both would have afforded a good excuse, David needed not to have taken such pains about God's service, as to pen special psalms for the solemn and public use thereof.

*Use 2.* A good precedent for every man in his place, especially for magistrates and superiors, to further God's worship to the uttermost of their power. Too many are of Michal's mind, that it is too base a thing for David to be seen among the Levites, dancing before the ark, especially clothed with a linen ephod, 2 Sam. vi. 20. But 'them that honour me,' saith God, 'I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed,' 1 Sam. ii. 30. Was it not David's special honour that he was a type of Christ? And herein, among other things, did he prefigure him, that he was zealous for the house of God, as Ps. lxi. 9, with John ii. 17.

But, alas! how few follow David and Christ herein! David gave liberally toward the temple, 1 Chron. xxix. 3-5. Christ whipped buyers and sellers out of the temple, because he would not have his Father's

house made a den of thieves: now many take liberally, and so bring thieves and robbers into the church; and of others we may say, as Mat. xxiii. 4, 'They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.'

Secondly, Here note that the sons, that is, the posterity of wicked and rebellious Korah, have an honourable place in God's sacred and solemn service: for to them sundry of David's psalms are commended, as Ps. xlii. 44-46, &c.

No doubt David saw them, being by place and birth Levites, to be faithful and diligent in their place, and thus renowns them to all posterity, that he composeth special psalms for their ministry in the solemn service of God.

*Use 1.* Here see the verifying of God's word, for the comfort of all godly children, that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, Ezek. xviii. 14, 17, 20, if he see his father's sins and turn from them.

*Object. 1.* But, Exod. xx. 5, God saith he is a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children.

*Ans.* That is, inquiring for the sin of the fathers among the children, and if there he find it, then pays he them home.

*Object. 2.* Achan's sons and daughters are stoned and burnt for the father's sacrilege, Joshua vii. 24, 25; and Dathan's and Abiram's little children are swallowed up, Num. xvi. 27.

*Ans.* For aught we know they might be of years of discretion, and privy to their father's stealth.

When little ones die in the punishment of the father's sin, God lays not the punishment of the father's sin upon the children; but, to make the father's sin more odious, doth then bring upon the children the fruit of their own original corruption, which is death determined upon all flesh, as appears, Gen. ii. 17, with Rom. v. 12. As a creditor, that hath both the father and the son debtors unto him by bond, may, upon the father's provocation, lay the forfeiture upon both, being both in his danger.

*Use 2.* Secondly, Here is special encouragement to the children of wicked parents to become godly and faithful in their places. In some sense they are the sons of strangers; for, Ps. lviii. 3, 'The wicked

are estranged from the womb,' yet if they leave their father's sins, and become faithful to the Lord, here is comfort for them in the honour of Korah's posterity: see Isa. lvi. 3, 'Let not the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath separated me from his people;' for, ver. 6, 7, 'The sons of the stranger, that joined themselves to the Lord to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer,' &c.; for, 1 Sam. ii. 30, 'Them that honour me I will honour, saith the Lord.'

Ver. 1. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!*

The matter of this psalm is a most solemn and pathetic expressing of David's high esteem of the place of God's public worship, with his ardent and earnest desire to have freedom and liberty to enjoy the same, which some<sup>1</sup> think, and that probably, he penned in the time of Absalom's rebellion, when he fled for his life out of Jerusalem, 2 Sam. xv. 14; for he mentioneth appearing in Zion before the Lord, ver. 7, which was after the ark of the covenant was brought thither, which was not in Saul's lifetime but after, 2 Sam. vii., about the thirteenth year of his reign. Or as others,<sup>2</sup> in the troublesome times of his great wars, whereby he was detained from the public place of God's worship, for that Absalom's rebellion was not so long.

He begins with the high esteem he had of the place of God's public worship, which by way of admiration he doth acknowledge unto God to be most lovely and amiable, ver. 1.

In the handling whereof we have these two things: first, The description of the person unto whom the acknowledgment is made; secondly, The matter that is acknowledged.

The description of the person is the Lord of hosts, **יהוה צבאות**, so as the point is this: the true God is the Lord of hosts, so ver. 3, 8, 12; Ps. xxiv. 10.

He is so called because all creatures in heaven and earth are at the Lord's command, as soldiers in an army at the command of the general, ready pressed to do his will. Hence all creatures in

heaven and earth are called the host of heaven and earth, Gen. ii. 1.

*Use 1.* This title shews the Lord's power and sovereignty over all creatures; he may command and set their places and stations at his pleasure, as generals do their soldiers in an army, see 1 Kings xxii. 19, 20. And hence are those strange events in war that the weaker do conquer, as Deut. xxxiii. 30; one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. So, 1 Sam. xiv. 6, 13, Jonathan and his armour-bearer smote a whole garrison of the Philistines.

*Use 2.* For admonition it serves three ways: first, For fear and reverence towards God's majesty; he is the Lord of hosts, having all creatures at his beck: Ps. l. 1, 4, 'The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth, from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof;' 'He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people;' Jer. v. 22, 'Fear ye not me! saith the Lord; will ye not tremble at my presence?' Mat. x. 28, 'Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.'

Secondly, That we take heed of abusing any of God's creatures; for he they never so mean, God can make armies of them to destroy the wicked. Consider his wonders in Egypt, of hail, of frogs, of flies, of lice, Exod. viii. 9, &c.; his dealing with Herod, Acts xii. Reason, as Isa. xxxvi. 9, &c., 'How wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the meaneast of my master's servants?' A terror to the wicked.

Thirdly, That we make sure we fight under his banner: for he is the Lord of hosts, and hath his spiritual armies and weapons; see Ps. cx. 3; Eph. vi. 10, &c.; and 2 Cor. x. 5; see Ps. xxiv. 7, &c., 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in;' that is, the ark. Then the Lord himself into men's hearts: 1 Cor. iii. 16, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' Rev. iii. 20, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.'

*Use 3.* For consolation sundry ways: First, to those that fight the Lord's battles, and stand in

<sup>1</sup> Musculus, Piscator.

<sup>2</sup> Mollerus.

defence of his church; see Ps. xli. 7, 11. As he is the Lord of hosts, so he hath made Jesus Christ the captain of his host, Joshua v. 14. 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper,' Isa. liv. 17.

Secondly, To any child of God in his particular distress; for he hath all creatures at command to serve and save his children, and to destroy their enemies; see Exod. xiv. 28, 29, the waters of the Red Sea are a wall unto the Israelites, but drown the Egyptians; Dan. iii. fire saves the three servants of God, and kills them that cast them in; so do the lions, Daniel, chap. vi. Dost thou want? the ravens shall feed thee, 1 Kings xvii. 4, 6; or angels, Ps. lxxviii. 25. Art thou in the sea? a whale shall bring thee to land, Jonah i. 17, and ii. 10.

The matter acknowledged is the loveliness of God's tabernacles, which, surpassing David's ability to express, he propounds by way of admiration, implying that they were to him most lovely and amiable, far surpassing his ability to express.

For our better understanding hereof we are to search out, as well the place, as the property for which David doth admire it.

The place is God's tabernacles or dwelling-places: whereby he meaneth that special place of God's public and solemn worship which God had chosen for himself among his people in David's time, promising there to be present with them, and to dwell among them, Exod. xxv. 8; Lev. xxvi. 12.

*Quest.* But why doth he use a word of the plural number, saying *tabernacles*, whereas Moses erected but one for the Lord; neither did the Lord allow of any other, till the temple was built by Solomon.

*Ans.* Some<sup>1</sup> think he hath reference to the divers places where God was worshipped at that time; for the tabernacle was at Gibeon, and the ark at mount Moriah, 2 Chron. i. 3, 4.

But it is more probable that he hath respect to the several parts and places of the tabernacle, which were made distinct by God's appointment. The court was for the people, as ver. 2; the holy place was for the priests; and the holy of holies was for the high priest once every year, as Heb. ix. 2, 3, 6, 7. In all of which God dwelt, though not inclu-

<sup>1</sup> Junius, Piscator.

sively as men do in their houses, for so the 'heaven of heavens cannot contain him,' 1 Kings viii. 27; but in regard of more special manifestation, testifying his favourable respect unto their worship and service, as 1 Kings ix. 3.

The property ascribed to this place is *lovely or amiable*, that is, such as draws the best affections of the heart unto it.

Here then note two points: one taken for granted, the other purposely intended. The point taken for granted is, that God hath his tabernacles, or dwelling-places, where he doth in special manner abide among his people: so as we may say, 'The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them,' Rev. xxi. 3. Under the law he had a material building, called the tabernacle of the congregation, erected by Moses at his appointment, Exod. xxv. 8, and xl. 34, 35, which place was moveable, and continued for God's worship, till God had given rest unto his people round about, and then he caused Solomon to build him a temple, 1 Kings vi. 1, 2. Under the gospel he hath a spiritual building; 1 Pet. ii. 5, 'Ye, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, whose house are we;' speaking of all the faithful who believe in God through Christ, Heb. iii. 6, who are the temple of the living God, in whom he dwells, 1 Cor. iii. 16, whether we conceive them jointly altogether, Eph. ii. 21, or divided into particular holy assemblies, Mat. xviii. 20, or personally considered, 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17, and vi. 19.

The reason hereof is twofold: first, The clearer evidence of his especial favour and respect unto them above all the people of the world; for 'the whole world is his, and the fulness thereof,' Ps. xxiv. 1, yet none can say, but the church of God, who are his people by covenant, that God doth dwell among them.

Secondly, For the better assuring of all the blessings of the covenant to those that be his people. For God in Christ is the true fountain of all good things: and his dwelling among them, in that manner which he did manifest in his tabernacle, gave plain evidence of his readiness to communicate his goodness unto them, according to all that he had promised in his covenant. This will appear by a brief view of the several parts of God's

tabernacle, considered with the special ends for which they were ordained. The whole tabernacle was made 'according to the pattern shewed in the mount.' It contained three distinct places—the court, the holy place, and the holy of holies; and in each of these there were several ordinances, serving by their use and signification to testify God's readiness, who there dwelt among them, to communicate his goodness to his people there serving him.

Take a view of some. In the court (which signified the visible church, wherein hypocrites may have a place for outward worship) was, first, the ministry of the word and prayer. Here the priests and Levites taught the people; as it is said of Christ, Luke xvii. 47, 'He taught daily in the temple;' here the scribes and pharisees sat in Moses' chair. Mat. xxiii. 2, and here both priests and people prayed, as Luke i. 10; for 'my house shall be called the house of prayer.' Luke xix. 46. Secondly, Here was the altar of burnt-offering, a type of Christ: for the altar and the twelve pillars resembled God and the twelve tribes making a covenant together with sacrifice, Exod. xxiv. 4. This altar in the court of the tabernacle was overlaid with brass, a strong metal, to signify that Christ God did sanctify his manhood to be an acceptable sacrifice, and strengthen him to do and suffer all things needful for our redemption and salvation. Thirdly, The laver for washing—a type of sanctification, Tit. iii. 5; Heb. x. 22.

In the holy place were three memorable things: first, The altar of incense, shadowing out Christ's intercession in heaven; secondly, The table of shew-bread, signifying that standing table of the word and sacraments, wherein God keepeth plentiful provision to feast his elect in Christ. Every one had in his incense cup pure incense put upon it, signifying fullness of joy in Christ Jesus.

Thirdly, The golden candlestick, a figure of the church, Rev. i. 20, because it holdeth up the light of God's word: the several branches resembled particular churches; and the lights therein signified the words of the prophets, or the holy Scriptures, 2 Pet. i. 19. The seven branches from one shaft, all of one matter, signified variety of gifts and graces, proceeding from one Spirit, Zech. iv. 2, 6.

In the most holy place, or holy of holies, was, first, The ark, whose lid was called the mercy-seat, overlaid with pure gold, and within it the two tables of the covenant, all shadowing Christ, who is our covenant, Isa. xlix. 8, and our propitiatory, Rom. iii. 25; 1 John ii. 2. Over the ark did God appear through the cherubims, signifying God teaching through Christ, who is attended by the ministry of angels.

Secondly, Here were the golden censers, to bring fire with incense to the mercy-seat, signifying that, with the incense of the spirit of Christ's sufferings, must be mingled by Christ himself upon the altar with fire, before that our service can be accepted, Lev. xvi. 12, with Rev. viii. 3, 4.

Thirdly, Here was the pot of manna which God gave them from heaven, signifying Christ crucified—'The bread that came down from heaven,' John vi. 41; 1 Cor. x. 3; also Aaron's rod that budded, testifying their rebellion, Num. xvi. yet, being near to the mercy-seat, was pardoned in Christ. These two last, Heb. ix. 3, 4, are said to be within the ark; where some<sup>1</sup> refer the relative to the former antecedent, which needs not, seeing that, standing before it, they were with it, for nothing was within but the two tables, 1 Kings viii. 9.

Besides these that did severally belong to some of the holy places, there were some things common to all. As, first, The anointing oil, wherewith every particular vessel and instrument was consecrate to his holy use, signifying the graces of the Spirit sanctifying us to God; secondly, The coverings for the whole tabernacle, signifying God's protection by his special providence over his whole church and every member thereof, as Isa. iv. 5, 6, 'Upon all the glory shall be a defence,' &c.; Ps. xxvii. 5, 'Thou wilt hide me in thy tabernacle.'

In all these, and many other, he both manifested his presence among his people, and also his readiness to do them good by communicating spiritual blessings among them. If any say, These things proved his presence amongst the Jews, but what are they to us? I answer, Much. They were types and 'shadows of good things to come: but the body is Christ,' Col. ii. 17, who is 'come by a more perfect tabernacle,' Heb. ix. 11; and him we have

<sup>1</sup> Jan. par.

among us in the word of the gospel, fully performing all that was prefigured in legal ceremonies.

*Quest.* Are our churches and chapels answerable to the Jews' tabernacle and temple for prerogative of God's presence?

*Ans.* No; difference of place in respect of holiness for God's service is taken away by Christ in the New Testament, John iv. 21, 23; 1 Tim. ii. 8. But the congregations of God's people, assembled for holy worship according to God's ordinance, have Christ present, as Mat. xviii. 20. They are God's house, Heb. iii. 16, and God's temple, 1 Pet. ii. 5; Eph. ii. 21.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

*Use 1.* For instruction, two ways: first, How to judge rightly of difference of place in respect of holiness,—namely, if it be God's habitation and dwelling-place: thus were the temple, the tabernacle, and people of the Jews more holy than others under the law. Papists say consecrated places for holy worship be more holy than other places, *Bellar., De Cultu Sancti*, lib. iii. cap. 4. But the truth is, our churches and chapels are as the Jews' synagogues, whereof, Ps. lxxiv. 8; of which we may say, as Mat. xxiii. 16, 17, 'Woe unto you, blind guides,' &c.; or as Bernard, *Habent sanctitatem, sed propter corpora vestra*, &c., Churches are holy because of your bodies, your bodies because of your souls, your souls because of the Spirit of God. As it was said of the Israelites, *Non propter locum gentem, sed propter gentem locum elegit*, (Concil., Aquisgr.) As Austin, *Quid suppliceturus Deo locum sanctum requiris? Volens in templo orare in te ora, et ita age semper ut Deo templum sis: ibi enim Deus creavit, ubi habitat*, (Aug., lib. sentent.) And Origen, (Hom. 5 in Lev.,) *Locum sanctum in terra non requiro positum, sed in corde*.

*Use 2.* Secondly, See whence the church of God in general, and every true member thereof in particular, have their stability, even from this, that they are the temple of God—God dwelleth in them, and he is stronger than he that is in the world, 1 John iv. 4.

*Use 3.* For admonition, here learn to take notice of God's dwelling-places, and to carry ourselves answerable to his goodness and bounty therein. His public dwelling-places are the holy assemblies of

ministers and people in holy worship; towards which we must have David's affection towards the tabernacle, Ps. xlii. 2, 3, and lxiii. 1, 2, and shew forth our desire to glorify God by provoking others to frequent the same, Isa. ii. 2, 3; Micah iv. 1, 2. But, alas! here justly we may complain, as Lam. i. 4, 'The ways of Zion mourn.' Few frequent these assemblies in comparison of those that run thick and three-fold to sinful and shameful assemblies, where Satan dwelleth, as he doth in places of idolatry and impiety.

For comfort it makes greatly to all God's children who are the members of his church; they have a double assurance that Christ dwelleth in them, their inward piety, and their outward profession. Hereon they may say, as Jer. xx. 11, 'The Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.' And with David, Ps. cxliii. 5, 6, 'Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!' Consider Luke xi. 21, 22, and John xiv. 17, 18.

The point purposely intended is, that God's tabernacles are most lovely and amiable, surpassing David's ability to express, Ps. xxvi. 8, xxvii. 4, and cxxii. 1.

The reason is, first, God's gracious presence as he stands in covenant with his people; for so he shews himself in his sanctuary, the place of his worship, and his presence is lovely: Ps. lxiii. 2, 'To see thy power and glory, so as I have seen thee in thy sanctuary.' This liked Moses so well that he had rather stay with it in the wilderness than go without it to Canaan, Exod. xxxiii. 25; Mat. xvii. 2-4. When Christ was transfigured in the mount, in the sight of Peter, James, and John, Peter liked the place so well that he said, 'Master, it is good to be here,' and moves for liberty to build three tabernacles.

Secondly, There God doth lovingly admit communion and society with his people, speaking unto them in his word, as Ps. l. 5, 7; Isa. xl. 1, and hearing them speak to him in prayer, Ps. l. 15; as Cant. ii. 14. It is, as we may speak with reverence, the wooing-place between Christ and his church; here

the contract is made in the covenant of grace, as 2 Cor. xi. 2; here is the love of espousals, Jer. ii. 2; here God allows and speaks comfort, Hosea ii. 14.

Thirdly, Here God doth shew himself most gracious in mercy and bounty unto his church. His gracious mercy is seen in removing evils from them: as, first, Blindness of mind, Isa. xxii. 7, with 2 Cor. iii. 14; secondly, Hardness of heart, Ezek. xxxvi. 26; thirdly, Transgression of life, Hosea xiv. 4. His gracious bounty is seen in spiritual and heavenly gifts; for where is regeneration wrought but in his church? Ps. lxxxvii. 4, 5, 'Man and man'—that is, every man that is born again—'was born in her;' for 'Jerusalem is the mother of us all.' Gal. iv. 26. Now hereby we are made the sons of God, heirs of heaven, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. Where are all the particular saving graces of the Spirit begotten in the hearts of men, but in the church ordinarily? Ps. lxxxvii. 7, 'All my springs are in thee.' The Spirit is the fountain, and peculiar graces the streams that issue thence, see John vii. 37, 39. Here God begets grace in thy soul, and is it not a most lovely thing to have such near and sweet society with God? It was divine joy to the Virgin Mary that the Holy Ghost did overshadow her, and form the blessed body of Christ in her womb, as we may see by her song: Luke i. 46, 47, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' Oh, consider that God begetting grace in thy heart in his church, Christ is formed in thee spiritually, Gal. iv. 19, which should be more joyful unto thee, if more might be, than Christ's conception was to her; because she might have been saved without that honour, but thou canst not unless Christ be formed in thee; here thou beholdest and art changed into the same image, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

Use 1. For instruction, first, That our Christian assemblies for evangelical worship are lovely places; for what David said of the legal tabernacle is most true of evangelical assemblies for the holy worship of God in Christ, in the word, sacraments, and prayer. For, Heb. ix. 11, 'Christ is now come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle;' and here he is present, Mat. xviii. 20, admitting his elect to holy society and fellowship

with himself, also exercising most gracious mercy and bounty in removing evils, and bestowing heavenly blessings and graces upon his.

Use 2. Secondly, See here a reason of David's strong affection towards the legal tabernacle, and proportionably of the affection of God's children toward evangelical worship: he was sick for sorrow when he was debarred from it, see Ps. xlii. 1, 2, and most joyful when he had freedom thereto, Ps. cxxii. 1. The reason is the loveliness of the place, for the presence, favour, and grace of God there to be enjoyed after a special manner. The world doth account God's children, for their zeal in following the preaching of the word, brain-sick persons, giddy-headed, and suchlike. But the truth is, these censurers—like sorry physicians, רפאי אלל, Job xiii. 4—mistake the place affected (as Festus did of Paul, Acts xxvi. 24;) they are sick indeed, yet not brain-sick, but heart-sick, sick of love, as Cant. v. 8, שחולת ארבה אני, after Christ. Whereof they need not to be ashamed, for God the Father loves them, and Christ also, John xiv. 21. Now it is no news that those that are in love should frequent the places where they may meet with their beloved.

Use 3. For admonition, it serves profitably two ways. First, To those that can see no loveliness in God's tabernacles among us; can take no delight or pleasure in the assemblies of God's people for his holy worship. Consider thine estate, for certainly as yet thou hast not David's heart, and he was a man according to God's own heart, Acts xiii. 22. Such are, first, recusant papists; secondly, profane contentmenters—of both whom we may say, as Mat. xi. 16, &c., 'Wherunto shall I liken this generation?' &c. These have no heart for God that are weary of his worship, see Mal. i. 13; Amos viii. 5. It is not the May-pole dance that will draw recusants: the dance about the golden calf would draw them all, Exod. xxxii. 6, 19. Jeroboam's calves at Dan and Bethel they like well, 1 Kings xii. 28, 29; and to set their posts by the Lord's, as Ezek. xliii. 8; but wisdom is justified of her children, Mat. xi. 19. These men, professing themselves to be wise, become fools, see Rom. i. 22-24. Mark well, till thou hast a heart for God's worship, thou hast no soul fit for heaven. How canst thou be a pillar in God's house, and never brought to the framing place? In the material



temple there were three places: so public assemblies are for regeneration and glory. For motives, think on John iii. 5, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'

Use 4. Secondly, To God's children; are they lovely to thee? Let thine actions towards God's worship declare the truth of thine affections.

Men of authority and wealth must apply both for the maintenance and furtherance of God's worship; so did David, 1 Chron. xxix. 2, 3, 'I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God,' &c. 'Because I have set my affection to the house of my God,' &c. Ministers especially must shew love unto, and delight in, the Lord's worship; by negligence they conceal the knowledge of God, see Mat. xxiii. 13; Luke xi. 52. The shew-bread must be set upon the table in the tabernacle every Sabbath new, Lev. xxiv. 8; by profaneness they cause the Lord's tabernacle and service to be forsaken and loathed, 1 Sam. ii. 17. People also must call one on another, Isa. ii. 2, 3; and all, both magistrates, ministers, and people, must pray for the Lord's power and providence in maintaining his pure worship. The next week being the time of ordination of ministers, it is not unfit to take notice of it, to do that which Christ enjoined, Mat. ix. 38, 'Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.'

Though papists observe such times superstitiously, yet we may do as Gideon, who sacrificed to the Lord that which was prepared for Baal, Judges vi. 26.

Ver. 2. *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.*

In the former verse David, by way of admiration, acknowledgeth unto the Lord the loveliness of his tabernacles; in this verse he doth in his own person verify his former confession, by discovering his own ardent and earnest affection, first, to the place of God's worship, then to God himself, for whose sake he so affected the place. His fervent affection towards the place is in these words, 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.' The courts of the Lord were two: one was the great court, that place whither the people came;

the other was for the priests, 2 Chron. vi. 9; for this David's soul longed and fainted. He had as great a desire after it as a woman with child hath after the things she longeth for; and being deprived hereof his soul fainted, as women will do when they miss of the things they long for. His vehement desire after God himself is in the latter branch, 'My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.'

In the words note two points: first, David's earnest and ardent affection towards the places of God's public worship—his soul longed and fainted after them; his affection towards this place was like the appetite of a woman with child, who is apt to desire some things inordinately, see Ps. xxvii. 4, xlii. 1, and lxiii. 1.

The reason hereof stands on a double ground: first, The sense of his own estate in soul for some spiritual wants. His estate in soul was this: first, He had a true spiritual hunger and thirst after heavenly things, as Ps. cvii. 5, which things were only to be had in the tabernacles of God. His case was like the prodigal child's, Luke xv. 17; he was hunger-starved, and there was bread enough at his father's house, for the tabernacles of God are *Bethlehem*, the house of bread, Mat. ii. 6. Here Christ is born, the true bread of life, John vi. 48, 50. It might well be called the house of bread, for anciently it was *Ephrath*, or *Ephratha*, a place of fruitfulness, Gen. xlviii. 7; and at Bethlehem was an excellent well, after which David longed, 2 Sam. xxiii. 15; so in God's tabernacles is the river of his pleasures, the fountain of life. Hither apply Ezek. xlvii. 1, 'The waters of the sanctuary,' and Zech. xiii. 1, 'A fountain for uncleanness.'

Secondly, David was in love, which affection will grow to be strong—strong as death, Cant. viii. 6, 7. Now the party he loved was here, and here only, to be enjoyed, for special spiritual society, 1 Kings ix. 3; see Cant. i. 7, 8.

Thirdly, David's soul was with child; he had spiritually conceived Christ. Now longing is ordinary to women with child, it is *genuitum in utero*,<sup>1</sup> and the thing he longed for was in the courts of the Lord.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

<sup>1</sup> Plin. lib. xxiii. cap. 6.

*Use 1.* For instruction, touching the good or bad estate of men's souls; for if our souls be in good estate, we must be affected towards evangelical worship, as David's was towards legal, for hunger and thirst, love and longing after heavenly things. In evangelical worship is our communion and fellowship with Christ and his benefits, and indeed in this world herein only and chiefly, because of God's ordinances. If thou say, with Naaman, 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?' 2 Kings v. 12, thou must keep thy leprosy of sin unless thou change thy mind, for all God's springs are here, Ps. lxxxvii. 7.

Now after trial it will be found true, that many neither hunger nor thirst, love nor long, but say, as Mal. i. 13, 'It is a weariness;' and as Amos viii. 5, 'When will the new moon and Sabbath be gone;' as Job xxi. 14, they say unto God, 'Depart from us;' and as the mixed multitude, Num. xi. 6, 'Our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, besides this manna, before our eyes.'

*Use 2.* For admonition, to labour to have our hearts affected towards evangelical worship, as David's was towards legal. The way is to inform ourselves of our natural misery in ourselves, for which there is no remedy but in the Lord's tabernacles, his *Betheshu*, John v. 4, &c., where 'whosoever first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.' Our misery is spiritual, in blindness of mind, hardness of heart, &c. Now here only is the Lord's eye-salve, Rev. iii. 18, and the Spirit that takes away the stony heart, and gives an heart of flesh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

*Us 3.* For comfort, it makes generally to those that truly desire and delight in evangelical worship; if herein they deal sincerely, they cannot but be acceptable to God, and he will give testimony to them, as he did to David, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart,' Acts xiii. 22: of them it may be said, as Mat. xiii. 16, 'Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear;' and as Mat. xvi. 17, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.'

*My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.* The second sentence, declaring David's vehement desire after the true God, here called the living God.

He names both heart and flesh, to shew the truth of his affection; as it was conceived in his soul, so it was expressed and manifest in his body, in voice and gesture, looking towards it, and crying out for it: so the word is translated, Prov. i. 20, 'Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets,' Lam. ii. 19, 'Arise, cry out in the night;' Ps. xvii. 6, 'I have called upon thee;' Ps. lxxviii. 65, 'Like a mighty man that shouteth.'

Here note the description of God, and David's affection towards him.

For the first, The true God is 'the living God,' so Ps. xlii. 2; Jer. x. 10, and in other places: for the better understanding whereof we must consider, first, In general what the life of God is: and then more particularly, what those special properties are whereby God shews himself indeed to be a living God.

For the first, The life of God is an essential property of the divine nature, whereby it is, and is conceived of us to be, in perpetual action, living and moving in itself and of itself. To give a reason hereof *a priori*, by way of causality, it is impossible; but *a posteriori*, or from the effect, we may argue thus: If God had not life in himself, he could not give life and being unto other things. But 'in him we live, we move, and have our being;' yea, 'he giveth unto all, life, and breath, and all things,' Acts xvii. 28, 25. Therefore he is a living God.

For the second, The special properties whereby God shews himself indeed to be a living God are three: his wisdom, his power, and his will. His wisdom, whereby in and of himself he doth know both himself and all things else, both universal and particular, that either have been, are, or shall be—yea, that might have been, or may be. His power, whereby he effectually doth whatsoever he will, and is able to do whatsoever he can will, both how, and when, and where he will. His will, whereby he doth most freely and justly, by one eternal immutable act, will his own glory as the end of all things, and all things else as the means of that end. He that hath these properties, and exerciseth these effects of life, must needs be a living God; which consideration may serve for a second reason of the point.

By way of use, it serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

*Use 1.* For instruction, it serves to distinguish between the true God and idols. That which lives not at all, or lives not of itself, cannot be God: this use the prophet Jeremiah makes of it, chap. x. 10; and the apostle Barnabas, and Paul, Acts xiv. 15, and I Thes. i. 9.

*Use 2.* For admonition: to the end we may have the like affection towards God as David had, we must imitate him in his esteem of God, and labour to have our hearts well settled in this persuasion, that the true God is indeed a living God. Otherwise, as he were not worth the crying after, so would it not be easy to induce us to it; for were he not a living God, how loud soever we should cry, he could not hear, and then we might conceive it as good to be silent; a deaf God and a dumb religion may do well enough together.

But (as the psalmist intimates, Ps. lxxv. 2, when he saith, 'Thou art the God that hearest prayer; unto thee shall all flesh come') hope of audience is that which openeth the mouth of invocation; for 'how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?' Rom. x. 14; and how shall men believe in any but a living God? what good can a dead god do them?

*Use 3.* For comfort: they that are the servants of the true God are the servants of the living God, and whilst God lives they need not fear to lack anything that is good for them; they need not fear falling into any temptation, out of which they may not assuredly expect a comfortable issue. This use Darius seems to have made of this consideration, Dan. vi. 20, 26, 27; and God himself may be thought to aim at and intend the same, when, to confirm the faith of his servants in the assured certainty of his promises, he sweareth by his own life, as Isa. xlix. 18, and teacheth his people so to swear, Jer. iv. 2, and when they commemorate his mercies unto them, to make mention of his life, Jer. xxiii. 7, 8, as the psalmist doth, Ps. xviii. 48.

To this description of the true God, the psalmist adds this expression of his affection towards him, 'My heart and my flesh crieth out,'—as much as to say, I do not only earnestly desire to enjoy God's presence in his sacred ordinances, but likewise outwardly, in all the parts of my body, I give evidence of that earnest desire. The observation will be this:

They that have the same esteem of the true God that David had, will earnestly in their hearts desire, and diligently in their actions and behaviours endeavour, to express and give evidence of that desire. The like expression is used, Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.'

The reason is, first, Because they make account that in communion with, and fruition of, the true God, consists their happiness.

By him they expect to be freed from all evil, and made partakers of all good things, as the psalmist expresseth more at large in the 4th, 5th, 11th, and 12th verses.

Secondly, Because an earnest desire in the heart is as sap in the root, which in the branches will bud and break forth into leaves and fruit. As the ointment in the hand will not be hid, but bewrayeth itself, Prov. xxvii. 16; so grace in the heart will discover itself in the words of the mouth and the actions of the life: 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,' Mat. xii. 34; and if the heart be inditing a good matter, the tongue will be as the pen of a ready writer, Ps. xlv. 1. 'I believed,' saith the psalmist, 'therefore have I spoken,' Ps. cxvi. 10; 'We also believe,' saith the apostle, 'and therefore speak,' 2 Cor. iv. 13.

By way of use it serves for reproof and admonition.

*Use 1.* First, For reproof of them that pretend they believe the true God to be the living God, yet neither with their hearts nor with their flesh cry out for him; who, if they have any desires at all to be made happy in fruition of him, and communion with him, yet even those desires are so remiss and cold, so faint and feeble, that others can perceive no evidence, and may well make a question whether they themselves be sensible of them. Perhaps they may say, as the psalmist tells us many do, 'Who will shew us any good?' Ps. iv. 6; but with him to cry out for the living God is a thing they think not of. Such spiritual sluggards the world hath too many, whose souls desire and have nothing, Prov. xiii. 4; nay, whose desires kill them, because their hands refuse to labour, chap. xxi. 25.

*Use 2.* For admonition unto all, that as ever they desire to assure themselves, or to testify to others, that they have the same esteem of the true God and of his sacred service that David had, to believe him indeed to be the living God, and account his tabernacles amiable; that they labour with him to stir up both their hearts and their flesh to cry out for him; that they earnestly desire the fruition of him and communion with him; that they diligently endeavour by all good means to express and give evidence of that desire. To move them the rather hereunto, let them consider that God is so delighted with his servants' importunities, and loves the loudness of their voice so well, that of purpose sometimes he takes upon him, as it were, to be asleep or hard of hearing, and will not be seen to take notice of their desires, until they attain to such a height of fervency that he cannot rest for them, as the phrase is by the prophet Isaiah, chap. lxii. 6, 7. 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' James v. 16. Fervency makes much to the efficacy of desires amongst men, much more with God, as our Saviour shews plainly in the parable of the importunate widow and the unjust judge, Luke xviii. 1, &c. To weary men is but a small thing in comparison of wearying God, Isa. vii. 13. If we walk after the Lord, as Hosea xi. 10, we are never so like to overtake him as when we have wearied him. A memorable example to this purpose we have in the woman of Canaan, Mat. xv. 21, &c., who, as if she had meant to try masteries with our Saviour, wrestled first with his silence by her importunity, crying after him so that his disciples besought him to send her away, and then, with his speech by her faith, making such advantage of his arguments against her for her own behoof, that with reverence we may say she got the better of him, and went away with an ample commendation, and grant of her desire to the full.

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*Ver. 3.* *Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God.*

Having in the first verse, by way of admiration, acknowledged unto God the loveliness of his taber-

naacle, the place of his holy worship, and in the second verified the same by discovering his own ardent affection, first to the place of God's holy worship, then to God himself, for whose sake he so affected the place, in this third he proceedeth in the former discovery of his heart's desire towards the place of God's worship, by debasing his present estate as worse than the condition of the sparrow and swallow, the one whereof finds her a house, the other a nest where she may lay her young; but he wanted liberty of access to the Lord's altars,—that is, to the Lord's tabernacle, where his altar was, the holy place of his solemn worship, which was to David's soul as the house to the sparrow and the nest to the swallow.

This application he enfoldeth in an aposiopesis, an interrupted exclamation unto God of his altars, concealing some words which should express his full meaning, from the passionate affection of his soul; which kind of speaking is most frequent, and fit to manifest fervent desires.

I am not ignorant that the Chaldee paraphrase hath other names of birds—viz., the dove, and the turtle, **יבנה** and **שפניה**—and the Septuagint, *σπευθιον και τρυγωνα*, the sparrow and the turtle, whom the vulgar Latin follows; but the proper signification of the words is as our English Bible hath them. Besides, interpreters differ in applying the latter part of the verse: some refer it by apposition to the former, as though the Lord's altars were the place where these birds did build their nests, which yet some others, not without cause, do dislike; because, though in the temple sparrows and swallows might build their nests, it being very spacious, yet it is not like they did build them in the tabernacle, which was the place of God's worship, when David penned this psalm. Now the application which I make, in a sacred aposiopesis, prevents that scruple, and yet prefers the condition of these birds before David's for outward liberty, which way soever we refer it. Though I conceive the true meaning of the prophet to be this, that the sparrow and swallow had liberty to build their nests and breed their young in houses which were belonging to others, whether near unto or far off from the tabernacle it matters not, all houses were alike to them: yet in houses they desired to build and were permitted, wherein these

birds had their desire; but David was debarred from the Lord's tabernacle, where his altar was, which to his soul was as a house and nest to the sparrow and swallow, and whereto he had right and interest, having the Lord of hosts for his king and his God.

In the words thus explained and taken, note these points:

First, That David prefers the outward condition of silly little birds, as the sparrow and swallow, before himself; to his sense and feeling their outward estate was better than his.

They had liberty to enjoy the place of their desire, even other men's houses to rest and nestle in, whose birds they were not; but he was debarred from the Lord's sanctuary, the only resting and nestling-place for his soul, though he had title thereto by special covenant, having the Lord of hosts for his king and his God.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

*Use 1.* For instruction thus, that God's special favour must not be measured by outward things; we must not judge them rejected from God's favour whose outward estate is mean and miserable, for so shall we offend against the generation of God's children, Ps. xxxv. 15. David was a man according to God's own heart, Acts xiii. 22, a pattern of piety to all succeeding kings of Judah and Israel; as 1 Kings iii. 14, to Solomon; 1 Kings xi. 38, to Jeroboam; yet for outward estate he was very miserable, 1 Sam. xxvi. 20, hunted as a flea or a partridge; Ps. cii. 6, 7, as a pelican, an owl, and a sparrow. Yea, Christ himself, the Son of God's love, Col. i. 13, had not whereon to lay his head. This his mean and miserable estate made the people in his time to judge rashly of him, see Isa. liii. 3.

*Use 2.* For admonition, beware of rash judgment either against ourselves or others. Consider, beside David, and Christ, before mentioned, the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Luke xvi., and the state of many whom the world was not worthy of, Heb. xi. 37, 38, which is a needful thing in these troublesome times of the church of God; beware of rash judgment, consider that 'judgment must begin at the house of God,' 1 Pet. iv. 17.

*Use 3.* For consolation, this makes greatly to the

afflicted and banished. Consider David's case at this time: nay, the case of Christ, who 'had not whereon to lay his head,' Mat. viii. 20. Now 'the servant is not above the master;' if it were so with the green tree, what may it be with the dry? Luke xxiii. 31. In such case we must say, as Christ of his kingdom, so we of our comfort. It is 'not of this world,' John xviii. 36. In this case and state nothing doth befall us but that which appertaineth to man, and God will give the issue, 1 Cor. x. 13. Consider the case of Christ's apostles, who were near and dear unto him, yet, 1 Cor. iv. 11, such as did 'both hunger and thirst, were naked, were buffeted, and had no certain dwelling place.'

Secondly, Here see that to David's soul the Lord's altars were as house and nest to little birds: the place of God's worship was the place of his chief desire, Ps. xxvii. 4, and cxxxvii. 5, 6, for the good things which were there to be enjoyed, which are fully set down in the next verse.

*Use 1.* First, See he had good cause of this grievous complaint: birds will mourn in their kind when they are driven from their nest.

*Use 2.* Secondly, See a notable evidence of the state of man before God, to discover whether he be acceptable to God, as David was, for then undoubtedly his heart cleaveth to the place of God's worship, as David's did here, and ver. 10, 'O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God.' These titles serve to amplify David's complaint; the first, 'Lord of hosts,' shews what God is in himself, and hath been handled in the first verse: the two latter, 'My King, and my God,' are titles of relation, shewing what God was unto David, namely, his King and his God, as he stood in covenant with him. In calling God his king, he doth not only acknowledge his absolute sovereignty, whereby he is king of all creatures, as Ps. ciii. 19; Dan. iv. 32, but his special regiment by his word and Spirit, which he doth exercise in his church on earth, which is his kingdom of grace, wherein David was a subject, being a member of his church, and so speaks to God as to his king: so likewise calling the Lord his God, he means not only by creation and preservation in general, but also by special covenant, wherein God, requiring faith and obedience of his creatures, doth undertake to afford unto them all the blessings of the covenant,

as well pertaining to this life, as to the life to come, see Exod. xxiii. 22; Dent. xxx. 15, 19.

Here observe, that David, a king, acknowledgeth God to be his king, as likewise he doth, Ps. v. 2; so that God is 'King of kings,' Dan. ii. 47. Nebuchadnezzar confesseth it: 'Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings.'

The reason is, because he hath the rule and command over kings, as kings have over their subjects.

*Use 1.* This serves for admonition: first, To superiors, directing them to use equity, justice, and conscience in all their dealings with their inferiors, for they themselves have a superior in heaven. By this argument the apostle persuades masters to use moderation towards their servants, Eph. vi. 9. And if this were thought upon, it would prevent negligence and injustice, the bane of superiority.

*Use 2.* Secondly, To inferiors, directing them to obey their superiors, not absolutely, but in the Lord. So in a family servants obey the steward, not against the will of the lord when they know it. Hence that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Dan. iii. 16-18, and that of the apostles, Acts iv. 19, and v. 29.

*Use 3.* Thirdly to all, teaching us humility and reverence in every action of worship we perform to God. How do men carry themselves in petitioning unto their king? They put up their petitions on their knees. What then are we, that we should not bow to the King of kings? Consider, Ps. xcv. 6, children asking blessing kneel to their bodily fathers, how much more should we to the Father of spirits? And reason to that purpose as the apostle doth for patient suffering of correction, Heb. xii. 9; for howsoever kneeling be not of absolute necessity, yet humility in gesture is necessary.

*Ver. 4.* *Blessed are they that dwell in thine house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.*

In these words the psalmist expresseth the state and behaviour of the true members of God's church, who have the free and comfortable fruition of God's holy worship and service, their estate is happy, and their behaviour godly and comfortable; which doth notably justify the equity of David's complaint, who by trouble and persecution was debarred from this happy and comfortable estate, in which regard he prefers the condition of silly birds before himself,

ver. 3. This verse doth naturally branch itself into two parts or propositions; whereof the first shews the happy estate; the second, the holy and comfortable behaviour, of the true members of God's Church.

For the first he saith, 'Blessed are they that dwell in thine house.' God's house in David's time was the place where the Lord's tabernacle was, as Ps. xxvi. 8; unto which, till the temple was built, God had appropriated his holy solemn worship, whereof see 1 Kings ix. 3. But now, in the New Testament, difference of place in respect of holiness is taken away, John iv. 21; and the true church of God is the house of God, 1 Tim. iii. 15; that is, such companies and assemblies as meet together in Christ's name, Mat. xviii. 20; that is, by warrant and authority from him, and according to his will revealed in his word; worship God in the right and reverent use of his holy ordinances, the holy word and sacraments sanctified by prayer, 1 Pet. ii. 5. To dwell in God's house is to abide and continue a true member of God's church, enjoying the comfort and liberty of God's holy worship and service, either in the place of the ministry, or of one of God's people; for though the priests and the Levites made special abode there, 1 Sam. iii. 2; and Ps. cxxxiv., yet others of the people, who did diligently frequent, and freely enjoy the liberty of God's worship, might be said to dwell therein, else David would not have used that phrase praying for himself, Ps. xxvii. 4; which I say, because some interpreters<sup>1</sup> would limit the first branch to the priests and Levites, but the 15th Psalm doth enlarge the benefit to all the godly.

The thing then to be observed in the first branch of the verse is this, that the true members of God's church, who have the comfort and liberty of God's holy worship and service, are blessed and happy: see Ps. lxx. 4, 'Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts.' Hence it follows, ver. 10, 'A day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.'

The reason hereof is, from the wonderful, rare, heavenly blessings, which are here certainly enjoyed

<sup>1</sup> Piscat., Junius.

by the true members of the church, and nowhere else. Whereof the first and principal, from which all the rest do flow, is the fruition of communion and fellowship with the true God, one in essence, three in person—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—who is only in his church to the true members thereof a God of grace and mercy; and therefore they that are out of the church, are ‘without God in the world,’ Eph. ii. 12. Here the first person is ‘the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation,’ 2 Cor. i. 3; the second person is a blessed Saviour and Redeemer: Isa. ix. 6, ‘Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given;’ a Saviour, Luke ii. 10, 11, with Isa. xlix. 6, 8. The Holy Ghost is the blessed sanctifier and comforter, being ‘the Spirit of grace,’ Zech. xii. 10, yet only in his church, John xiv. 17. Now this true God is in his church, to all the true members thereof, not only a master far excelling Solomon, of whom the Queen of Sheba testifies that his servants were blessed, 1 Kings x. 8, with Mat. xii. 42; and such a master as saith, ‘Where I am, there shall also my servant be.’ John xii. 26, with Luke xii. 37, 43, 44; but a father, Mat. xxiii. 9, John xx. 17; yea, a husband, Isa. liv. 5, ‘Thy maker is thine husband;’ and Isa. lxii. 4, 5, ‘Thy land shall be married.’ ‘As a young man marieth a virgin, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.’ Jer. iii. 14, ‘I am married unto you.’ Hosea ii. 19, 20, ‘I have betrothed thee unto me for ever,’ &c.

Secondly, This true God in Christ gives to all the true members of his church freedom and deliverance from all the miseries of nature—that is, from the whole guilt and curse of sin, in original corruption and actual transgressions; see Luke i. 68, 74; Gal. iii. 13; Rom. viii. 1; Acts xiii. 39.

Thirdly, Here is afforded the full fruition of all needful blessings, as Eph. i. 3, ‘Who blesseth us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ.’ And not only so, but even with all needful temporal blessings, Mat. vi. 32, 33. These blessings may be reduced to four heads:

First, To direction in all the ways wherein they ought to walk: Ps. xxxii. 8, ‘I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go;’ Ps. lxxxiii. 24, ‘Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel.’ If the

good housewife order the ways of her household, Prov. xxxi. 27, how much more God!

Secondly, To provision both for soul and body: for, Ps. xxxiv. 10, ‘They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing;’ for soul, John vi. 33, 35, 55, 63; 1 Cor. x. 16. Here is Christ the tree of life, and the well of life, wherof, Ps. lxxxvii. 7, ‘All my springs are in thee;’ Rev. xxii. 1, 2; and heaven for an inheritance, Luke xii. 32; 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. For temporal, see Isa. lxy. 13; Ps. xxxvii. 3, 4.

Thirdly, To protection and preservation by special providence, Ps. xxv. 5, and xci. 1, implied and assured to all the faithful, Mat. x. 29–31. The king’s servants in ordinary may not be arrested but upon warrant from the lord chamberlain; but God’s servants have a greater privilege; God himself must grant the warrant, else they may not be meddled with, Job i. 10; John xix. 11; Acts xviii. 10; Ps. lxxxix. 22.

Fourthly, To remuneration, both here with honour of grace to be his friends, John xv. 14, 15; 1 John iii. 1, and attendance of angels, Ps. xxxiv. 7, and xci. 11, and hereafter, Mat. xxv. 21, 23; Luke xix. 17, &c.; Mat. xix. 28, 29.

*Use 1.* Is it such a blessing to dwell in God’s house? then it is a great curse to dwell out of it; for so they should be deprived of all the forenamed blessings. This made David to say, ‘Woe is me that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar,’ Ps. cxxv., and 1 Sam. xxvi. 19, ‘If they be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods.’ The ancient resemblance of God’s church to Noah’s ark is true, and fit for this place.

*Use 2.* Secondly, We must examine whether we be such as dwell in God’s house, as true members of the church; and such only are true believers in Christ, for ‘no man cometh to the Father but by him,’ John xiv. 6. Whereby will be excluded all Gentiles, who are without Christ, Eph. ii. 12, and Turks and Jews, who though they acknowledge the God that made the world, and brought Israel out of Egypt, yet not believing Christ Jesus, the Son of the Virgin Mary, to be the Son of God and Saviour of

the world, they 'shall die in their sins,' John viii. 24; Luke xiii. 28.

Yea, besides them papists holding the doctrine established in the Council of Trent, who do not only deride,<sup>1</sup> but accuse<sup>2</sup> the doctrine of justification by imputed righteousness, will be found Ishmaelites, the sons of the bondwoman, such as must be put out of the house, Gal. iv. 21, 30, and such guests as want the wedding garment, which is Christ's righteousness imputed and received by faith, see 2 Cor. v. 20; Rev. iii. 18. Our white raiment to cover our filthy nakedness of sin must be had of Christ; also by their idolatry they hold not the head, Col. ii. 18, 19. Also they that profess the truth, and yet content themselves with a dead faith, are not dwellers in God's house; that is, such as 'have a show of godliness, but want the power thereof,' 2 Tim. iii. 5, who profess they know God, but by their works deny him,' Tit. i. 16. Of such St James speaks, chap. ii. 18, 20, 'Shew me thy faith without thy works,' &c. He that must abide in the house for ever must be a son, John viii. 35, which we all are through faith in Christ, Gal. iii. 26, and by regeneration, 1 John v. 1; for of such the apostle saith, 'Thou art no more a servant, but a son,' Gal. iv. 7. Therefore, whosoever would certainly know himself to be in God's house, and to continue therein, must get true faith, and keep it, and shew the truth of it by works of love, Gal. v. 6, and of obedience to God's word, 1 Thes. ii. 13.

*Use 3.* As we desire the assurance of true happiness, we must approve ourselves dwellers in God's house—that is, such as continue and abide the true servants and children of God. Our holy calling to the faith of the gospel gives us entrance and admittance into the family of God, 1 Cor. i. 2, 9; Eph. ii. 18, and iii. 12; and our perseverance and continuance in the same faith is it that doth manifest our abode and dwelling in God's house, 1 John ii. 19. Now this faith is one, Eph. iv. 5, as God is one; and if it be true it worketh by love, Gal. v. 6, and is seen by obedience, wherein we must be constant, Phil. ii. 12; Mat. xxiv. 13; and herein we must approve ourselves dwellers in God's house, having our ears bored, Exod. xxi. 6; Ps. xl. 6; 'Endeavouring,' as 1 Tim. i. 19, 'to keep faith and a good conscience,'

<sup>1</sup> Rhem. on Rom. iii. 22.    <sup>2</sup> Conc. Trid., sess. vi. can. 10.

and, 2 Tim. i. 13, 'Holding fast the wholesome word in faith and love.' In great houses here on earth we see great men make use of retainers, which are not servants in ordinary at bed and board, but have houses of their own, where for the most part they live, and look to their own business. Only at good times, as they say, and on some special occasions, they come to their lord and master and wait upon him in his livery, and are welcome to him, and well accepted as his servants; but in the church of God, which is the house of the living God, the Lord of heaven and earth, it is not so; all whom he owneth and acknowledgeth for his servants are servants in ordinary—they dwell in his house, Ps. lxxv. 4, performing the service of prayer and thanksgiving, and the works of obedience, every day. He hath no retainers acknowledged by him for his servants, I mean such as take liberty to live as they list, and for the service of God, like retainers, think now and then, as on high days, and once on the Sabbath, is well enough.

Indeed, such attendance will serve for a retainer, but God acknowledgeth none such for his servants, see Jer. vii. 9–11. He knoweth, that is, acknowledgeth, those that be his, John x. 14, but such as be workers of iniquity he knows them not, as Mat. vii. 23. So we may say for idolaters, as papists be in the worship of saints and of their bredden god, they have another master than God, namely, vain idols, 1 Thes. i. 9; 'Now none can serve two masters,' Mat. vi. 24. Time-servers are in the same rank; which be, first, Such as make conscience of sin at communion times, but afterward live as they list; also such as embrace and hold true religion only because the authority under which they live doth enjoin it, and if it should alter by the will of man they would turn with it; thirdly, Church papists, who now and then come to our service and sermons to answer the law, but in their hearts they are for Romish superstition, like the carnal Israelites, whose hearts turned back into Egypt. Of these we may say, as 1 Kings xviii. 21, 'How long halt ye between two opinions?' &c.

*Use 4.* A great comfort and encouragement to them that persevere in the faith and go on in obedience; they are blessed, and shall certainly, if they go on, be glorified, see Mat. xxiv. 13; Rev. ii. 10,



and iii. 12. Every one that is such shall be made a pillar in God's house, and shall go no more out. Therefore in general let all be encouraged to follow the good servants that improve their master's talents, Mat. xxv. 21, 23; and the apostle Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. In special let ministers, who are stewards and disposers of the mysteries of God, look to their behaviour, 'shewing all good faithfulness,' 1 Cor. iv. 2. This fidelity is set down, Luke xii. 42-44, with 1 Pet. v. 1-4.

Thus much for their happy estate; their holy behaviour is answerable.—'They will be still praising thee.' God's children and servants, who have the happiness to dwell in God's house, will be much and constant in praising God: see Ps. cxxxv. 1, 2, 'Praise the Lord, ye servants of the Lord,' &c. Ver. 19, 'Bless the Lord, O house of Israel: bless the Lord, O house of Aaron.' Ver. 20, 'Bless the Lord, O house of Levi: ye that fear the Lord, bless the Lord.' Ps. cxlv. 1, 2, 'I will extol thee, my God, and my King; I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee.' Ps. cxlvi. 1, 'Hallelujah. Praise the Lord, O my soul.' Ver. 2, 'While I live I will praise the Lord.'

The reasons hereof are two: first, The sacred ordinance of God, and his holy commandment, Ps. 1. 15; 1 Thes. v. 18. This makes it pleasant and comely, Ps. cxlvii. 1.

Secondly, The power of his grace given to his children and servants, which, making them mindful of the Lord, of his word, and of his works and benefits, stirs them up to praise God. True grace is enforcing, as 2 Cor. v. 14; and hence it is with God's servants in the matter of praising God, as it was with the apostles for preaching, Acts iv. 20, and as Luke xix. 40, 'If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.'

This by way of use serves,—

*Use 1.* First, To let us see that praising God is not a thing indifferent, but a necessary duty. Hence the want of it brings the wrath of God, as on Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

*Use 2.* Secondly, We may see by this that they have slender testimony that they be of God's house, who fail of this duty. A usual thing for many to have no prayers nor praising God in their families, as also to go out of church when singing psalms

begin, as though praise were no part of that service, the performance whereof appertains unto them who dwell in God's house and would be blessed there.

Thirdly, This should serve as a most forcible motive to endeavour this duty, which we shall the rather do if we consider the motives in God, in his properties, his works, for his church and against his enemies; also what our behaviour in heaven should be, whereto we should begin to inure ourselves here upon earth.

Ver. 5. *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; the highways are in their heart.*

Ver. 6. *They going through the valley of Baca make it a well.*

Ver. 7. *They go from strength to strength; every one of them appeareth before God in Zion.*

Here the prophet proceedeth in the commendation of the state of God's people, whom he doth expressly affirm to be blessed, and likewise plainly and particularly describeth them by their true and certain properties, which are of two sorts: first, They are such as are strong in the Lord.

Secondly, They do sincerely and earnestly affect the holy worship of God, which property is here fully expressed by three things: first, Their hearts are set upon the highways that lead to the Lord's sanctuary, ver. 5. Secondly, They do courageous and comfortably endure and break through all difficulties in the way, ver. 6. They increase in number and strength in their journey, and all of them in troops appear before the Lord in Zion, ver. 7.

For the first: 'Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee.' To be blessed is to be in a happy estate, wherein a man enjoyeth the true and chiefest good, which is the true God in his special favour, as Ps. cxliv. 15. But who do so?

*Ans.* First, 'The man whose strength is in the Lord,'—that is, who resteth not nor relieth upon himself, but on the Lord, and by him is made strong against enemies, both corporal and spiritual, and also enabled for every good duty which the Lord requireth at his hands. And thus understanding the words, the point is clear to be observed: that man is in a blessed and happy estate whose strength

is in the Lord,—that is, who trusteth not to himself, or to any other person or thing, for his safety from evils, and ability to do well; but only on the Lord his God, on whom he resteth, and resteth by true faith and confidence: see Prov. xvi. 20, 'Whoso trusteth in the Lord is happy.' Jer. xvii. 7, 8, 'Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord.' Ps. exxv. 1, and cxlvi. 5, 'Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help.'

The reasons are, first, No man is or can be strong by his own power. This is true, both in things pertaining to the body, Deut. viii. 17, 18, and to the soul, John xv. 5.

Secondly, No enemy shall be able to hurt him that is strong in the Lord. This is true both for corporal and spiritual enemies: for corporal, see Ps. lxxxix. 21, 22, 'With whom mine hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him: nor the son of wickedness afflict him.' Ver. 23, 'I will beat down his foes before his face.' Hence, Ps. iii. 6, 'I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about;' and Ps. xxvii. 1-3, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?' &c., Jer. xx. 11.

Thirdly, No work nor duty which God requires at his hand shall be hard for him who is strong in the Lord; see 2 Cor. iii. 5, and xii. 10; Phil. iv. 12, 13.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

*Use 1.* For instruction, first, In the way to true happiness; it stands not in any outward thing, as natural men think, but in the fruition of the true God; for he is the chiefest good, whom whosoever enjoys can lack nothing that is good, for he is all in all to those that are his; hence Ps. xxxiii. 12, 'Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.' Gen. xv. 1, 'Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward:' and chap. xvii. 1, 'I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be perfect.' Hence Exod. xxxiii. 15, 19, 'If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence,' &c.

He communicates his goodness to those that enjoy him, as 2 Chron. xvi. 9; Ps. xxviii. 8. Hence Jer.

ix. 23, 24, 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,' &c.

*Use 2.* Secondly, See here who be miserable and accursed—namely, all such as are not strong in the Lord, but in themselves, or something beside the Lord: see Jer. xvii. 5, 'Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm; whose heart departeth from the Lord.' Now such are many, as well for earthly as for heavenly things. For earthly, all such as use unlawful means to procure earthly blessings, as lying, fraud, stealing, oppression, &c. Can these say, as Ps. xlv. 3, 'Thy right hand and thine arm,' &c. Nay, as 1 Kings xxi. 19, 'Hast thou killed and also taken possession,' &c. And for heavenly, they that trust to their own righteousness, as papists do, the Jews did, Rom. x. 3.

*Use 3.* Thirdly, This should admonish us to be as careful to be strong in the Lord as we are desirous to be truly happy; for the man is blessed whose strength is in him.

To this end we must give all diligence for three things:

First, That we stand truly in covenant with God in Christ, which is by believing on him, see Ps. cxxv. 1.

Secondly, That we be upright-hearted, dealing truly and sincerely with him in our profession, 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

Thirdly, That we be constant in obedience, 2 Chron. xv. 2; Ps. lxxxii. 13.

*Use 4.* Fourthly, This serves for comfort to the upright-hearted, trusting in God, and walking in obedience, see Ps. xc. 1. Let such assure themselves the Lord will be their strength; see Ps. lxxviii. 28-35, and xxviii. 6, 7. They may say, as Ps. iii. 6, and xxvii. 1-3, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?'

*The highways are in their heart.* Here the second property of those that are God's true people is expressed; they do sincerely and truly affect the holy worship of God, as is manifest by their behaviour in three branches: first, The ways to God's house are in their heart,—that is, they love and like, and in heart desire and delight in the ways that lead to God's house.

They that be truly God's people have their hearts set upon the way and means of God's worship, see Ps. cxxii. 1, and xxvi. 8.

Because by those ways they come to enjoy the presence of God, society and fellowship with him in whom they place all their happiness.

*Use 1.* This serves, first, To let us see what we may think of those that have no love nor liking to the ways of God's house, but think it is a weariness, as Mal. i. 13, that say of the Lord's day, as Amos viii. 5, 'When will it be gone?' And of the word and worship of God, as Job xxi. 14, 'Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of his ways.' Certainly these are in a cursed estate, as Acts xiii. 10; as Elymas the sorcerer was, see Acts xix. 9.

*Use 2.* Secondly, It is a matter of great comfort to those that desire and delight in the means wherein they may have society with God in Christ. Surely 'flesh and blood hath not revealed it' unto them, Mat. xvi. 17. Let these consider Luke xi. 22.

*Use 3.* Thirdly, It is a good caveat to labour with ourselves, that the ways to God's house may be in our hearts, that we may desire and delight in them, love and like them. Now as we have another tabernacle and sanctuary, which is Christ Jesus, Heb. viii. 2, so our ways are not material but spiritual, which we must love and mind; and that is the evangelical worship by which we come to have society and fellowship with God, see Acts xxiv. 14; and xix. 9. This is called the Lord's highway, Isa. xxxv. 8, כַּסְלִי, xi. 16, xlix. 11, xl. 3, xix. 23, and lxiii. 10; Jer. xxxi. 21.

Ver. 6. *They going through the valley of Baca make it a well; even with blessings shall the rain cover.*

The second evidence of God's people's sincere and earnest affection towards his holy worship, they do courageously and comfortably endure and break through all difficulties and troubles in the way.

That we may conceive so much by the words, we must know that the word בַּכָּה, *Baca*, signifieth a mulberry-tree, which loves to grow in dry places that be sandy and barren, 2 Sam. v. 23. 24, or 1 Chron. xiv. 14, 15. Now they whose hearts be set upon God's house and holy worship, when they go thitherward through a sandy, dry, barren valley, do make it a well,—that is, repute and count it as a

well; the word יִשְׂתַּחֲוֶה signifieth to put or set, as Gen. iii. 15; Ps. xxi. 6, 12, and lxxxiii. 11, 13. For thus will they say with themselves, thinking upon the comfort of God's favour to whom they go, that it shall be to them as the rain of blessings, a plentiful and liberal rain upon the dry ground. Or, as Tremellius, Junius, Wilcocks, &c., 'Whom also the rain of blessing falleth much upon,'—that is, they sometime endure the trouble of the way when abundance of rain falleth upon them. If we follow our own translation, 'The rain also filleth the pools,'—that is, where springs are not, the people dig and make pits and places to receive rain water, and therewith refresh themselves in their way to Zion, though I most incline to the first of them. The seventy interpreters, εἰς τὴν κοιλάδα τοῦ κλαιῶντος, εἰς τὸν τόπον ὃν ἔθετο, 'In the valley of tears, in the place which he hath set.' Καὶ γὰρ ἐδωκεν ὁ νομοθετῶν, 'For the lawgiver shall give a blessing.' The Chaldee paraphrast, *Peccatores autem transibunt in profundum gehennae; pluctum plangent, sicut fontem ponent illum: atqui benedictione amicientur qui insulant, ut discant legem tuam.*

In the words note two points: first, What manner of way some of God's people had to go to the public solemn worship of God; secondly, How the godly esteemed of it, and cheer up themselves in it. For the way, it was the valley of Baca,—that is, of mulberry-trees, and so dry, and barren, and sandy, which is very wearisome; some say the vale of misery, others vale of tears, of weeping; all import a painful and troublesome way.

The reason was the providence and ordinance of God; his providence in their situation by lot, for so Joshua divided the land to God's people, Joshua xiv. 12, and his ordinance in appointing them to come to that place which he should choose, Deut. xii. 5, which was Jerusalem, mount Zion.

*Use.* See then here, that God in his providence may dispose so of the estate of his children, that it shall be troublesome and painful for them to go to the place of God's public and solemn worship; so it was to those that dwelt far from Jerusalem, in the latter end of the days of David and afterward. And so he dealt upon his sovereignty, to teach them, and all after them, that there is but one Christ, in whom we can come to the Father, John

xiv. 6, for partaking of whom, he may in his providence dispose that it may be far more troublesome and painful for some than others, as it was among the Jews for partaking of his special worship; which we must take notice of, to acknowledge God's sovereignty over us and our estate, as John xxi. 22, with 18, as also Job xxi. 23, 25.

In the second place, observe how the godly deal about the troubles of the way unto God's solemn worship; they put it for a well. Now in those countries wells were cheerful and refreshing places, Judges i. 15; so as the godly among the Jews esteemed the troublesome and painful way to God's solemn worship pleasant and cheerful.

The reason was the great desire they had unto the service of God, and the true delight they took therein; this made the wearisome way seem pleasing. They looked at the comfort they should enjoy in the presence of God, and therewith refreshed themselves against the wearisomeness of the way, as Jacob was affected with his seven years' service for Rachel, Gen. xxix. 20.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

*Use 1.* For instruction two ways: first, See here the power and strength of the grace of love to God, and to his holy worship—neither pains nor cost can stand before it: see Cant. viii. 7, 'Many waters cannot quench love.' For pains here we see it; and for cost in David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24; 1 Chron. xxix. 3, 4. Nay, it breaks through worldly credit and esteem, which is a strong let, as John xii. 42. Yet, Luke xix. 2-4, we see it had little force in Zacchæus, and in David, 2 Sam. vi. 20-22.

*Use 2.* Secondly, See here what to think of ourselves and others, when ease, pleasure, and worldly profit or repute will hinder from God's service. Can we say they are blessed? Sayest thou 'a lion is in the way!' Then art thou Solomon's simple one, whom ease slayeth, Prov. i. 32, xiii. 4, and xx. 4. So Prov. xxiv. 10, 'If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.' Consider Mat. xii. 42, and xi. 22, 23.

*Use 3.* For admonition; labour to come to this ability of grace in the high esteem of God's worship. For which end know that it is the ordinary way and means of society with God.

*Use 4.* For comfort to those that have this affection; to them it may be said, as Mat. xiii. 16, 'Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.'

*Even with blessings shall the rain cover; or, the rain of blessings shall even cover.* This translation I take to be most proper and agreeable to the words and matter in hand.

In these words the prophet propounds the very thought and meditation of the godly going up to God's worship, whereby they do cheer up their hearts against the weariness of the dry and hot sandy way. They say thus within themselves in their greatest weariness, 'The rain of blessing shall even cover;' thinking upon the grace and favour which God showereth down upon his servants in his holy worship, which as comfortably and sweetly refresheth their souls in any weariness as a plentiful rain doth the dry ground: for the better conceiving whereof we must know that it is usual with God in Scripture to resemble the sweet comfort of his grace and favour, vouchsafed to the souls of his servants in his holy worship, to the sweet refreshing that rain and showers give to the dry ground; see Deut. xxxii. 2, 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass;' Ps. lxxii. 6, 'He' (that is, Christ in his doctrine, as the truth; and also Solomon, as the type, in his wise and righteous judgment) 'shall come down as rain upon the mown grass: and as showers the dispersed moisture of the earth;' Hosea vi. 3, 'He shall come to us as the rain; as the latter and former rain upon the earth.' No marvel, then, if the godly do in such phrase and words express their thoughts and meditations upon God's grace and favour, vouchsafed to his children in his holy worship, especially in the time of their bodily weariness through heat and drought in a sandy way.

Now then, thus taking the words of the prophet to express the thoughts of the godly in their wearisome way, to be set upon the comfort of God's grace and favour, wherewith in his holy worship he plentifully refresheth their souls, as a plentiful rain doth the dry ground, in them we may plainly note and observe three things; two expressed, and the third necessarily implied. The two things here ex-

pressed are, first, Their gracious thoughts and meditations in their wearisome way; secondly, The esteem and account they make of God's grace and favour. The thing implied or presupposed is the means and place wherein they make account to enjoy the same.

For the first; the godly Jews that dwelt far from Jerusalem, in their wearisome way to Zion, do set their hearts to think upon the sweet and plentiful refreshing of God's grace and favour which shall be showered upon their souls in his holy worship. We are now, say they, parched and scorched with heat in this dry and barren wilderness; but when we come before the Lord, our souls shall be plentifully refreshed with the showering down of his grace, 'We shall be satisfied with the goodness of his house, even of his holy temple,' Ps. lxxv. 4.

This they do to strengthen and hearten themselves to endure the toil and pains of their wearisome way; even as in nature merchants do hearten themselves, by the hope of gain, to endure the toil and terror of the troublesome seas; and husbandmen, by the hope of harvest, do readily undertake the labour of seed-time.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

*Use 1.* For instruction two ways: first, It lets us see plainly the right way to sound comfort, and so to true patience in any outward distress or bodily misery, (which is a great matter to God's children, who through manifold tribulations must enter into the kingdom of heaven, Acts xiv. 22,) namely, to bring the heart to feel and feed upon God's spiritual and heavenly blessings and graces, which be contrary to our misery; as in worldly poverty and want, to set thy meditation upon the heavenly treasure and riches of God's grace in Christ, Mat. vi. 20; Col. i. 27, whereby the poorest in the world may by true faith be made rich to God, James ii. 5; for by it thou purchasest the field wherein the treasure is hid, Mat. xiii. 44, 45, and buyest the pearl of price, and so art rich to God, Luke xii. 21. So in imprisonment of body, by faith to meditate on our Christian liberty, and enlargement from spiritual bondage by Christ Jesus. In banishment and exile from our friends and country on earth, to meditate upon our heavenly home, and consider

that our heavenly Father is with us leading us, Ps. cvii. 4, 7. In bondage to hard masters, to remember we are Christ's freemen, 1 Cor. vii. 22. In danger, to remember God's presence and providence, Ps. cxviii. 6, 7. In sickness, to meditate on the health of the soul, in the pardon of sin in Christ, as Mat. ix. 2. In blindness, to meditate on the spiritual light and sight of grace, which Christ gives, Luke iv. 18. Yea, in death itself, either natural or violent, both which be the loss of life, to meditate upon our spiritual life in grace, and of eternal life hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 4. And so for any worldly want, or hurt, or loss, we may see there is a spiritual and heavenly supply, Mat. xix. 29; Luke xviii. 29, 30. Thus we shall see God's servants have done in former times, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Heb. xi. 8, 9, 'By faith they sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, looking for a city whose builder and maker is God.'

Thus Job did in his losses consider God's providence and hand, chap. i. 22; and in deepest distress meditates on the resurrection to life, chap. xix. 19-21, 25. Thus did David, Ps. xxvii. 13, 'I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' And bereupon in distress he stirs up his soul to wait upon God, Ps. xlii. 11, and xliiii. 5; and prays to God, as Ps. cxvi. 3, 4, 'The sorrows of death compassed me; the pains of hell gat hold upon me. Then called I upon the name of the Lord.' Yea, he saith, Ps. xciv. 19, 'In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul;' and Ps. xxiii. 4, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me.' Therefore see Zech. xi. 7. Thus did the godly under the persecution of Antiochus, Heb. xi. 35, 2; Maccab. vii. 7. Thus did Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 16-18, and v. 1; yea, the Son of God in our nature did thus, Heb. xii. 2.

*Use 2.* Secondly, This lets us see the true reason or ground of the different behaviour and carriage of God's children from natural men in two things.

First, In times of danger, wherein 'the righteous are bold as a lion,' but 'the wicked flee when none pursueth,' Prov. xxviii. 1; as we may see in David at Ziklag, 1 Sam. xxx. 6, and Nabal hearing of a

danger past, 1 Sam. xxv. 37. Surely the godly have a heart indued with grace, which is as a hand to lay hold on God's mercy and providence, and so have hope even in death; whereas 'the wicked is driven away in his wickedness,' Prov. xiv. 32. The wicked are men without hope, 1 Thes. iv. 13; now 'hope is the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast,' Heb. vi. 19.

Secondly, About God's worship and service they greatly didler. God's child takes great delight in pains about God's service, as here we see, and Ps. exxii. 1, and in cost also; as 1 Chron. xxix. 9, the people rejoiced at their great gifts, and David rejoiced with great joy, and 2 Sam. xxiv. 24; yea, though it cost them their lives, Acts xx. 24, and Phil. ii. 17. But the wicked count it a weariness, Mal. i. 13; and with the Gadarenes, had rather want Christ and his gospel than their hogs, Mat. viii. 32, 34.

And no marvel, for they think it a vain thing to serve God, Mal. iii. 14.

*Use 3.* For admonition it serves two ways. First, With these religious Jews to give ourselves to meditate and think upon the true and sweet comfort which the blessings of grace, bestowed in God's holy worship, will bring to our souls; for certainly herein is plentiful spiritual supply to all wants, as is implied, Luke iv. 18, whereof, if we were resolved, we would watch at the posts of wisdom, Prov. viii. 34, and hang upon this ordinance, as the impotent persons did at the pool of Bethesda, John v. 3, 4. The want hereof causeth contempt of God's worship in some, Mal. iii. 14, and formal usage in the most, as John iv. 11; Acts xxviii. 22.

Secondly, Labour for that estate in grace whereby we have stay and comfort for our souls in times of distress. The way is to get and practise true faith in Christ; for thereby we shall live in want, Phil. iv. 12, 13; in persecution, Heb. x. 38; yea, resist the devil, 1 Pet. v. 9, and quench all his fiery darts, Eph. vi. 16. But know it works by love, Gal. vi. 5, purging the heart, Acts xv. 9, and reforming the life, Acts xix. 19.

For comfort, this practice of the godly shews plainly that the child of God is never left of God in misery, without true ground of stay and comfort. God may hide his face, and we may be troubled, Ps.

xxx. 7, and lxix. 2, 3; but, as Ps. xliii. 5, 'wait,' for, Heb. xiii. 5, 'he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;' and consider 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9, 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;' ver. 16, 'Though the outward man perish, yet the inward is renewed daily; while we look not at things that are seen, but at things which are not seen.'

The second thing to be noted here is the high esteem and account which the godly Jews did make of God's blessings of grace to be received in his holy worship; namely, that they are to their souls as the rain of blessings that covereth, that is, as a plentiful rain, which abundantly refresheth the dry and thirsty land. This may be seen in David's desire and acknowledgment, answerable to the matter in hand: Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, 'My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in thy sanctuary.' What benefit should David reap by this? ver. 5, 'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,' for Christ in grace comes down into men's hearts 'as rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth,' Ps. lxx. 6; 'In his days shall the righteous flourish, ver. 7; so Hosea vi. 3.

Now thus they express their esteem of God's grace, partly because the remembrance hereof did notably serve to cheer up their souls in their dry, sandy, and wearisome way, as is said before.

And principally because they knew out of God's word, and by experience in themselves, having tasted formerly of God's good work of grace, that God's graces were to man's soul, that which plentiful seasonable rain is to the dry ground; which is evident by the state of the soul, as well wanting grace, as being indued therewith. In the want of grace, what is the soul but as dry, barren ground without rain or water: Jer. xvii. 5, 6, 'He whose heart departeth from the Lord shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not be seen when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and shall not abide,' (ולא תשב). But the soul stored with grace is like

a field which the Lord hath blessed with plentiful rain, viz., both fruitful in itself, and pleasing and profitable to the owner; see Ps. lxxii. 6, 16, when Christ comes down like showers, 'there shall be an handful of corn upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.' Ezek. xxxiv. 26, 27, 'I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase.'

This serves for instruction, for admonition, and comfort.

*Use 1.* For instruction two ways: first, See in this resemblance the absolute necessity of grace to the welfare of the soul; for so is the moisture of rain or water to the earth, that it may be fruitful, and so pleasant and profitable unto man, as we may see by the cursed vineyard, Isa. v. 6, and by the mountains of Gilboa, whereon Saul and Jonathan fell, 2 Sam. i. 21, which is a most material point for every man's heart to be resolved of.

*Use 2.* Secondly, This resemblance doth plainly and sweetly illustrate this material and weighty point in Christian religion, viz., that saving grace to the soul is a supernatural gift of God, neither is it in the power of man of himself to get saving grace; see John iii. 27, 'A man can receive nothing except it be given from heaven;' as before, ver. 3, 'Except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God,' with ver. 7, 8. Can the earth be fruitful without moisture? and can it of itself cause the clouds to drop down rain upon it? No such thing.

*Use 3.* For admonition, it serves notably to move every one to set his heart to think seriously on this resemblance, as Deut. xxxiii. 46, with reference to ver. 2, that so we may labour to bring them to be affected to God's saving graces, as dry ground is toward rain and moisture, which we see doth chop and gape after moisture, and so in its kind cry to the clouds for showers.

This was in David, Ps. exliii. 6, with lxiii. 1. But, alas! this thirst is rare to be found. Worldly thirsts there are in many: the drunkard's thirst, Deut. xxix. 19; the worldling's thirst, Hab. ii. 5;

the epicure's thirst, whose belly is his god, Phil. iii. 19; the ambitious man's thirst,—Diotrephes, 3 John 9; and the malicious man's thirst, the bloodthirsty, Ps. v. 6. Thirst after these things doth keep away this thirst after grace, without which we shall never escape Dives' thirst in hell, Luke xvi. 24. If we have a golly thirst, it will appear by diligence in frequenting the place and means of grace, Prov. viii. 34; brute beasts for want of water will break through hedges, and grace-thirsty souls will make their ways through all encumbrances to come where they may have satisfaction. Secondly, We will delight herein, as David did, Ps. iv. 7. Thirdly, We will receive satisfaction and shew it.

*Use 4.* For comfort, it serves to encourage them that find themselves so affected to the blessings of grace as the Jews did here,—viz., to esteem them as the rain of blessings; they may assure themselves that they likewise shall find the like fruit and effect of them, to be covered,—that is, to be abundantly refreshed by them.

The third point to be noted here is implied—viz., the place and means wherein they assure themselves of these blessings, namely, in the holy worship of God which he ordained in his tabernacle, which made David to long and to thirst after them, ver. 2; see Isa. ii. 3, 'Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob;' Ps. lxxv. 4, 'Blessed is the man whom thou choosest,' &c.

The reason hereof is God's sacred ordinance, who hath here assured the blessing and life: for 1 Kings ix. 3, his eyes and his heart are there perpetually, and so as elsewhere it is not to be had, Zech. xiii. 17, 18. Now the gospel preached is to us God's tabernacle, Rev. xxi. 3, as Acts xv. 16.

This serveth for instruction, and that two ways:

*Use 1.* First, See one main cause of the want of grace in men's souls; they do not love God's house, nor wait upon him in his ordinances, but count them a weariness, Mal. i. 13, with iii. 14; and Job xxi. 14, as John v. 40, 'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life;' so Acts xiii. 46.

*Use 2.* Secondly, See here the honour of God's house, and now of his holy worship above other ordinances, as Micah iv. 1, 2. Here is the well of life, and tree of life, Rev. xxii. 1, 2; all his springs are here, Ps. lxxxvii. 7.

Ver. 7. *They go from strength to strength: every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.*

The third thing whereby the prophet doth declare the sincere affection of the godly towards God's holy worship is their alacrity and courage, which they, like valiant soldiers in marching array towards the enemies, do manifest in the way to Zion. For the better conceiving whereof, we must know that the word *היל*, here translated *strength*, doth properly signify *vigour, courage, alacrity, power, or spirit*, as Exod. xviii. 21. Jethro's magistrates must be *היל אנשי* men of courage, and a woman complete and furnished for all good parts of a wife is *היל אשת*, *mulier strenua*, a virtuous woman, a woman of all good parts for her place, Ruth iii. 11; Prov. xxxi. 10; and therefore also the people of God by this word express their valour, as Ps. lx. 12, 'Through God we shall do valiantly;' *נעשה היל*, Ps. cviii. 13, and Ruth iv. 11, 'Do thou worthily;' Deut. iii. 18. Moses calleth men of prowess and valour, *היל בני*, sons of prowess or power. And hence it is taken to signify an army, wherein power is both required and shewed, Exod. xiv. 4, and it signifies riches and wealth, because that makes men potent in the world, as Ps. xlix. 7, 11; Prov. x. 15, and xviii. 11; and in all the book of Job; for compare Job xxi. 7, with 2 Kings xv. 20, and it will be plain.

Now in this place I take it in the first and proper sense, for the alacrity, vigour, and prowess which a man of spirit will shew in that thing which he desires to effect. So the godly Jews, desiring to come to Zion, the place of God's worship, go from strength to strength—that is, they do not faint or leave off through weariness or length of the way, but ever and anon renew their courage, and cheer up themselves, and so go from strength to strength. And the latter part of the verse shews what it is which puts life and courage into them—namely, their spiritual sight or vision of God in Zion, when there they appear before the ark of the covenant, the pledge of his presence, according to his ordinance, Deut. xvi. 16, as was said from Abraham's time, 'In the mount will the Lord be seen,' Gen. xxii. 14.

To come, then, to the first part of this verse, therein this is plain:

The godly Jews, in David's time, went cheerfully and courageously to the place of God's worship, and

did increase in strength and courage, notwithstanding the weariness and length of the way, and so went from strength to strength. Ps. xlii. 4, 'I had gone with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holiday;' Ps. cxvii. 1, 'I rejoiced in them that said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.' Look how courageous soldiers will stir up themselves, and hearten one another unto fight; so did the godly Jews stir up and cheer up themselves in the way to God's worship.

The reason was their desire through grace to enjoy spiritual society with God, which was assured unto them in the holy worship of the tabernacle and temple, as 1 Kings ix. 3, 'I have chosen this place, here will I dwell: mine eyes and mine heart shall be there continually.' Hence Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired,' &c. This is the wooing place between Christ and his church; and hence is his direction prescribed to her, inquiring where he did feed and make his flock to rest; and her affection declared toward this place. Cant. iii. 4, 'It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.' And the nearer they come to God, the more lively they are: 'From faith to faith,' Rom. i. 17, with xiii. 11.

This serves for instruction, reproof, admonition, and comfort.

Use 1. For instruction, it lets us see, first, That there is a spirit of life in the faithful under the gospel, to make them forward and courageous in their holy profession, and to cheer up themselves unto God's holy worship. We have herein some more encouragements than they had under the law, from the ministry of the Spirit under which we live, see 2 Cor. iii. 13–18; though the same God, and the same Mediator Jesus Christ, to-day, yesterday, and the same for ever, Heb. xiii. 8; see 2 Cor. iv. 13, 16, 18; 1 Cor. ix. 24–26; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. So that a Christian may say, as Paul doth, Acts xxi. 13, 'What do ye weeping,' &c.

Use 2. Secondly, The vigour and strength of the godly increaseth more and more in their way of God's worship, and in the course of a godly life.



Prov. iv. 18, 'The path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' Ps. xcii. 13, 14, 'Such as be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God,' &c. Rev. ii. 19, 'The last works of Thyatira are more than the first;' add Eph. iv. 11-15.

*Use 3.* Thirdly, This is a just reproof of those that say they are Christians, and yet have no spirit, no courage, no life for religion and for God's holy worship; but are dead and cold—every little thing doth daunt and hinder them—they have no courage for the truth, nor for God's glory. Is the Lord's hand shortened? Is Laodicean luke-warmness a matter of no danger? Rev. iii. 16. Certainly they want the spirit of grace, for it is as fire that will break out, Jer. xx. 9; like new wine that will vent, Job xxxii. 18; see Prov. vi. 27.

*Use 4.* Fourthly, It must admonish us to shew life and courage in holy worship and in a godly life. They did it going to mount Zion, we to the heavenly Jerusalem. Consider what wrestlers do, 1 Cor. ix. 25, 26. *Quest.* How shall we get it? *Ans.* It is a fruit of the Spirit, as 2 Tim. i. 7, in those that are redeemed, Tit. ii. 14; Rev. iii. 19.

*Use 5.* Fifthly, A comfort to the children of God against the reproach of the world, which will reproach and brand them with odious names, hot-spirited and mad, as they did our Saviour, Mark iii. 21; and Festus, Paul, Acts xxvi. 24.

*The God of gods shall be seen in Zion.*

This is the thing that puts life and vigour into God's servants; when their way to God's worship is long and painful unto them, God shall be seen in Zion, the place appointed by himself for his holy worship; or, as our translation hath it, 'Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God;' both one in substance, for when God is seen in Zion, they that see him appear before him. The reason of the different manner of translation is the divers acception of the word **לשׁן**, which sometimes is a preposition signifying *ad, to, unto*; otherwise it is a noun, signifying strong, and so noteth the mighty God. The ordinary difference is **לשׁן**, *Deus*, is written with a long *e*, but **לשׁן**, *ad*, a preposition, with a short *e*; and so most Hebrew books with prickles have it here, which moved our new translators to take it for a preposition, wherein many other godly and learned

do join with them. Which yet others as learned stick not at, because they say that vowel is there short because of *Maccaph*, which joineth two words together, and usually doth abbreviate the precedent vowel. And so the most ancient Greek and Latin translations<sup>1</sup> take it, and divers learned modern writers, as Pagnin, Calvin, Mollerus, and our old church Bibles. But since in sense and substance both come to one, I will herein follow the ancients, and so note in the words two things: first, That the true God is the God of gods; secondly, That this true God shall be seen in Zion, the place where the temple was built.

For the first, The true God is the God of gods, Joshua xxii. 22; 'The God of gods the Lord,' Ps. l. 1, and cxxxvi. 2; 'The mighty God,' Dan. xi. 36; 'The Lord of lords, and King of kings,' Rev. xvii. 14, and xix. 16; 1 Tim. vi. 15.

The reason of this title is his divine sovereignty over all those that do partake with him in his name, as angels and magistrates: angels, Ps. xcvi. 7, with Heb. i. 6, and Ps. viii. 6, with Heb. ii. 7; and magistrates, Ps. lxxxii. 1; Exod. xxii. 8, 9, 28; John x. 34, 35. And false gods, though unlawfully, for they are vanities, **לשׁן**. Now God's sovereignty over them is plain: for angels, Heb. i. 7, with Job i. 6; and for magistrates, 1 Tim. vi. 15; and for idols, Exod. xii. 12. Dagon falls down before the ark, hath his head and hands cut off, 1 Sam. v. 3, 4.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

*Use 1.* For instruction, see the blessed estate of those that have the God of gods for their God, as Ps. xxxiii. 12, 'Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,' and Ps. cxliv. 15; for he hath power over angels and kings and devils.

*Use 2.* For admonition, first, To choose the God of gods for our God; herein following Rahab, Joshua ii. 9, 11, and xxiv. 15; and Naaman, 2 Kings v. 15, 17. Now our way is through Christ, John xiv. 6; Mat. xi. 27.

*Use 3.* Secondly, To sanctify him in our hearts, and let him be our fear and dread, Isa. viii. 13. Remember the angels before his glorious majesty cover their faces with their wings, Isa. vi. 2.

*Use 4.* For comfort to those that stand rightly in

<sup>1</sup> Sept. and Vulg.

covenant with God; they need not be dismayed for any terror, as 1 Pet. iii. 6; as Ps. xxiii. 1, 4, iii. 6, 8, cxvi. 7, 8, and cxviii. 6; as Dan. iii. 16, 17; and hereon, as Rom. viii. 31, 'What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?'

The second thing to be noted here is, that in Zion, the holy hill, the seat of his sanctuary, will God be seen. This was so well known, that from Abraham's naming of it *Jehovah-jireh*, when there he should have sacrificed his son, it became a proverb and common saying, 'In the mount will the Lord be seen;' and so Musculus acknowledgeth that all the late writers do translate it, though he himself do not very well like of it, saying, that if he durst, he would think that those who put pricks to the Bible in Hebrew, did without need change the verb active *יִרְאֶה*, will see, into the passive *יִרְאָה*, will be seen. But Mercerus, a most learned and judicious man for the Hebrew text, judgeth it was done by divine providence, that posterity might know that there God would place his sanctuary, and therein appear unto his people, and there also have Christ the Lord to be seen; and the LXXII do translate it by the verb passive *εἰδθή*. And for proof, see Ps. lxxxvii. 2, 'The Lord loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob.' It is the mountain of his holiness, 'beautiful for situation; the joy of the whole earth is mount Zion,' where God is known. Ps. xlviii. 1-3, and l. 2, 'Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, hath God shined.' When Solomon had built his temple here according to God's direction, then God said, 'I have chosen this place, here will I dwell,' &c., 1 Kings ix. 3.

*Quest.* How was God seen in Zion? *Ans.* Not in essence; for so 'no man hath seen God at any time,' John i. 18. But, first, In his sacred ordinances, which were pledges of his presence, as the ark of the covenant, Num. x. 35; 2 Chron. vi. 41; Ps. cxxxii. 9, 'Arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place,' &c.; also the cloud sometime filling the house, Exod. xl. 34; 2 Chron. vii. 2; 1 Kings viii. 10, 11; and the fire consuming the sacrifices, Lev. ix. 24; 1 Kings xviii. 36-39.

Secondly, and chiefly, In his Son incarnate, as Mal. iii. 1, with Luke ii. 26-28; for in Christ the Father shews himself, as John xiv. 9, 10.

This God was pleased to do, first, For the honour and advancement of h's people Israel: as Deut. iii. 7, 'What nation is so great, that hath God so high unto them?'

Secondly, To beautify his sanctuary: as Hag. ii. 7, 'I will fill this house with glory.' Hence it is called high, 1 Kings ix. 8.

Thirdly, and chiefly, To stir up his people to desire and delight to come to his sanctuary, as Ps. xlii. 1, 2.

*Quest.* What is this to us? This place belonged to the Jews.

*Ans.* See Isa. ii. 2; Micah iv. 1. It was a type of the church of Christ, as Heb. xii. 22, which is therefore called 'the holy city, new Jerusalem,' Rev. xxi. 3, 10, and thereof it is true, Mat. xxviii. 19, 20, with xviii. 20.

This serves for instruction, reprehension, admonition, and comfort.

*Use 1.* For instruction, it lets us see that though difference of place in respect of holiness of the places be taken away in the New Testament, as John iv. 21, 23, yet in respect of God's sacred ordinances there used, some places have an honour above others, at least for the time when those ordinances are in hand, as Mat. xviii. 20. And so M. Calvin acknowledgeth that there is a beauty belonging to temples and churches in the New Testament, which should draw the affections of the faithful unto them.

*Use 2.* Secondly, A just reproof of wilful recusants and profane protestants, that care not for the place of God's worship; they are far from David's mind, Ps. xxvi. 8, with xlii. 1, 2, and cxvii. 1, and vers. 1, 2 of this psalm. nay, they are as those, Job 14, that say unto God, 'Depart from us.'

*Use 3.* Thirdly, This should stir up all that have care of the true welfare of their souls to love God's house, and God's worship, the house for the worship, as David did. Consider his comfort in death, Ps. xxxi. 5, which will be contrary to the wicked, as Mat. xxv. 41.

*Use 4.* Fourthly, For comfort to the godly; their love to God's house for grace is an entrance to his house of glory, as 2 Pet. i. 9, 10.

Ver. 8. *O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.*

Here he returns to pray for audience to his request for free and safe fruition of the place of God's worship, in which he shews the more earnestness by doubling his requests, and enforcing them by several titles given to God, to whom he prays, which may strengthen his heart in his assurance to obtain his requests.

The first title is, 'O Lord God of hosts,' which he hath given to God twice before in this psalm,—viz., vers. 1, 3; yet here it is repeated with more emphasis by addition of the title *God*; which shews that the godly in prayer do not faint, but increase in zeal and fervency, till they obtain their requests, as Dan. ix. 19.

For they are enabled to this duty by the Spirit, which helpeth their infirmities, being neither weary nor faint, Rom. viii. 26.

Also they know that God liketh importunity, Luke xviii. 1, 6, 7, and fervency, James v. 16.

*Use.* Which should be a precedent and encouragement to us in prayer, to shew fervency and constancy therein.

For the first description of God by these titles, 'O Lord of hosts,' it hath been handled in the first verse, with the application thereof:

The point is this, The true God is the Lord God of hosts, &c.

The matter he here prays for is audience, 'Hear my prayer: give ear;' the doubling hath its emphasis, and shews his fervency and earnestness for audience. Mark, then, the holy prophet prayeth earnestly to have his prayers heard; see Ps. v. 1, 2, and xliii. 1, 2.

This he doth, because to his seeming God did too long delay to satisfy his desire; for David longed and fainted like a woman with child, ver. 2, whose case will hardly admit delay.

This shews for instruction and admonition.

*Use 1.* For instruction see this, that sometime God useth long delays in answering the prayers of his children, see Ps. xxii. 2, lxxvii. 7-9, and lxxx. 4.

*Quest.* How can this be, seeing he saith, 'Ask, and ye shall have?' Mat. vii. 7.

*Ans.* First, The sins of God's children may hinder this blessing, as Ps. lxxvi. 18; John ix. 31; Isa. lix. 2; as 2 Sam. xii. 16, &c.

Secondly, God may delay to answer for a time, to

kindle zeal in his children, as Mat. xv. 22-28; as our Saviour dealt with the father of the child that was possessed with a dumb and deaf spirit, Mark ix. 18, 22, &c.

Thirdly, To express their patience under the cross, as 2 Cor. xii. 19.

Fourthly, To teach them to rest contented with such supply as God ministereth, for he heareth and answereth not always in that particular men beg, but sometime in that which is more for God's glory, and as good for his children, as Heb. v. 7.

*Use 2.* For admonition, every child of God must mark God's dealing herein with his dearest servants, that by God's delays they neither be dismayed in this duty, nor doubt of God's favour; for this was David's case, and Christ's. We should wisely consider the reasons of God's delay, and make use thereof.

The latter title he gives to God is, 'O God of Jacob,' which he propounds upon his second and more earnest request for audience.

Mark, then, that when David would fain have audience with God in prayer, he calls him the God of Jacob.

The reason of this title here is, first, In regard of the covenant which God made with Jacob and his posterity, who are often styled by the name of Jacob; as Ps. lix. 13, 'God ruleth in Jacob;' and Isa. xliii. 1, 'But now saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel.' Chap. xlv. 1, 'Hear now, O Jacob my servant, and Israel, whom I have chosen.' 'I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel,' chap. xliii. 3. 'Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen,' chap. xlv. 2. Now this is a great ground of assurance of audience, that the God to whom he prayed was his God by covenant; for God saith of this people, 'O Jacob and Israel, thou art my servant; I have formed thee; thou shalt not be forgotten of me,' chap. xlv. 21.

Secondly, and more especially, In regard of the special favour that God shewed to Jacob when he changed his name to Israel, in suffering himself to be overcome by Jacob when he wrestled with him: Gen. xxxii. 24, 26, 28, 'As a prince,' saith he, 'hast thou power.' Hosea saith, chap. xii. 3, 'By his strength he had power with God;' ver. 4, 'yea, he

had power over the angel,' (that is, Christ the angel of the covenant;) 'he wept and made supplication unto him;' mark the means of his prevailing prayers and tears. Now David remembers this, and calls him 'the God of Jacob,' to encourage himself in prayer, and to get assurance of prevailing: for the God of Jacob is he that suffers himself to be prevailed with in prayer, and he is without shadow of turning, James i. 17; 'To-day, yesterday, and the same for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

*Use 1.* For instruction, see here a gracious practice of God's servants, both to mark and mention in their prayers such dealing of God with their forefathers as may encourage them in this duty, and strengthen their faith in assurance to prevail. It is here plain in David, when he calls God the God of Jacob; but more plain in Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 14, when coming back to the waters of Jordan, with the mantle that fell from Elijah, wherewith Elijah had a little before made a way through the river on dry ground, ver. 8, he doth the like thing that Elijah did, using these words, 'Where is the God of Elijah?' as if he should have said, Sure he can do to me as he did to him. This thing moved the church of God often to mention God's gracious dealing with their forefathers, as Ps. xlv. 1-4, and xcix. 6-8; see Ps. lxxiv. 13, 14, and Isa. li. 9, 'Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days. Art thou not he that hath cut Rahab, (that is, Egypt,) and wounded the dragon in the waters?' (that is Pharaoh;) and ver. 10, 'Art not thou he which dried up the sea?' &c., meaning, that he can do so still. So Jehoshaphat in his prayer, 2 Chron. xx. 7.

*Use 2.* For admonition, remember that 'whatsoever was written afore-time was written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope,' Rom. xv. 4. We therefore must read the Scripture with observation, and thus encourage ourselves in prayer to prevail with God for his church, and for ourselves.

*Use 3.* For comfort, in prayer remember the true God is the God of Jacob; he will be prevailed with by prayers and tears; but follow and imitate Jacob, leave not off, give not over till he answer, as Isa. lxii. 1, 2.

Ver. 9. *Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.*

In the former verse, David did most earnestly beg of God audience to his prayer. In this verse, continuing the same duty of prayer, he begs of God, (whom he calleth their shield,) with like earnest affection, (for he doubleth his request,) the favour and kindness to be beheld and looked upon; moving the Lord thereto by the honourable state whereunto God had advanced him, in anointing him to be a king, so as he was the Lord's anointed.

In this petition note three things; first, The title which he gives to God; secondly, The favour he craves of God; thirdly, The reason whereby he would move the Lord to grant that favour. For the first; the title he gives to God is their shield, 'O God our shield.' A shield we know is a part of armour for defence, serving to keep off and award the hurts and blows which an enemy might give; and so by fit resemblance shews what God becomes to those that be his—namely, a sure defence and safeguard from all hurtful assaults of their enemies. Mark then in this title, that God is a shield for his children, that is, their sure and safe protector and defender from the hurts of all their enemies: Ps. iii. 3, 'Thou, Lord, art a shield for me;' Ps. xviii. 2, 'The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation;' Ps. xxxiii. 20, 'He is our help and our shield;' Ps. lix. 11, 'Bring them down, O Lord our shield;' and as it followeth in this psalm, ver. 11, 'The Lord God is a sun and shield.'

The reason hereof is his own free grace and favour in Christ to those that be truly in covenant with him, as Gen. xv. 1.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

*Use 1.* For instruction two ways: first, To let us plainly see the great happiness of the godly, that though they have many and mighty enemies, both corporal and spiritual, yet their God is an all-sufficient safe buckler and shield of defence against them all, see Deut. xxxiii. 29, 'Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help.' Ps. cxlv. 15, 'Happy are the people that be so; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.'

*Use 2.* Secondly, This shews how magistrates should shew themselves toward the godly, when any wrong is offered unto them, namely, as the Lord himself is, whose name they bear, Ps. lxxxii. 6; so they should become shields,—that is, sure protectors and defenders of the godly; so Job was, chap. xxix. 11, &c., ‘When the ear heard me, it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave ear to me. Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.’ Magistrates are called shields, Ps. xlvii. 9; Hosea iv. 18, and therefore should become protectors of the good, unless they will have their own names to rise up in judgment against them.

*Use 3.* For admonition, it serves effectually to move every one to labour carefully for that estate wherein they may truly have the Lord for their shield. Hereunto three things are necessary.

First, That we stand rightly in covenant with God, having avouched him for our God, not only by receiving the seals of the covenant, in being baptized and coming to the Lord’s table, which hypocrites may do, but especially by reverent receiving the word of the covenant, and humbly submitting ourselves thereto, as God required, when he avouched Israel to be his people, Deut. xxvi. 16–18, and they performed, when they sat down at his feet, every one receiving his word, Deut. xxxiii. 3.

Secondly, We must see that our hearts be indited with true faith, whereby we trust in God unfeignedly, resting and relying upon his promise for all the blessings of the covenant. This grace entitles us to have God for our shield. Prov. xxx. 5, ‘Every word of God is pure, he is a shield to those that trust in him.’ Ps. xviii. 30, ‘The word of the Lord is tried; he is a buckler to those that trust in him.’ Ps. xxviii. 7, ‘The Lord is my strength and my shield: my heart trusted in him, and I am helped;’ also Ps. xxxiii. 18–20.

Thirdly, We must walk uprightly before him, making conscience of all sin, and leading a godly life. This God required of Abraham, to whom he promised to become a shield, Gen. xvii. 1, with Gen. xv. 1; and Solomon gives assurance hereof,

Prov. ii. 7, ‘He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly,’—that is, to those that look in all things to please God, and lean neither to this sin nor that. And to move us hereunto, let us consider the evils of the times, in the abundance of iniquity, which cry to heaven for most heavy judgments; let us think upon the troubles of other nations, and our own present danger sundry ways, especially from divisions both in church and state. Now in times of trouble, nothing can be better for us than to have the Lord for our shield, for then we need not fear; what can man do unto us? Ps. cxviii. 6.

*Use 4.* For comfort, this makes greatly to all that be in covenant with God, and testify the truth of their faith by upright walking before him; for God is their shield; what need they fear? Consider Ps. xxvii. 1, 2, ‘The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?’ &c.; Jer. xx. 11, ‘The Lord is with me like a mighty terrible one: therefore all mine enemies shall be confounded, but I shall not be confounded.’ This made David not to fear ten thousand of the people that should beset him round about, Ps. iii. 6; nor walking through the shadow of death, Ps. xxiii. 4. This made the three servants of the Lord not fear the hot fiery furnace, nor the fierceness of the king, Dan. iii. 16, 17, &c.

Now consider that God is without shadow of change, James i. 17; and he was a shield to Abraham, David, Jeremiah, and others. Let us therefore labour to be like them, and we may with like confidence rest assured of God’s protection, as the Lord promised, 1 Kings ix. 4, 5, and as the godly do comfortably expect, Ps. xxii. 4, 5.

The second thing to be noted here, is the favour which he begs and craves of God, namely, that God would behold and look upon his face, that is, look upon him favourably, taking gracious notice of his estate and desire: Ps. cxlii. 4, ‘Look upon my right hand, and see,’ so the words are in the original, as the marginal reading hath it; Ps. cxix. 132, ‘Look upon me, and be merciful unto me;’ Ps. lxxx. 14, ‘Look down from heaven and behold;’ so Isa. lxiii. 15, ‘Look down from heaven, and behold, from the habitation of thy holiness, and of thy glory.’

The reasons hereof are two: first, Because God’s looking upon his face was a comfortable sign of his favour and kindness; as Ps. lxxx. 3, 7, 19, ‘Cause

thy face to shine, and we shall be saved;' Ps. xxxi. 36. 'Make thy face to shine; save me for thy mercies' sake.' This is more plain by the contrary, God's hiding of his face, which is in Scripture a plain sign of God's anger and displeasure: Deut. xxxi. 17, 18. 'Then shall mine anger be kindled against them, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them:' and Ps. xliii. 1, 'How long wilt thou forget me. O Lord? for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?'

Secondly, David desired God to look upon his face, because he conceived it might be a special means to move to mercy. For David no doubt shewed in his very countenance a godly sorrow for his restraint from God's sanctuary, as also an earnest desire of that favour, that he might safely frequent the place of God's worship; see Ps. xlii. 1, 2, for his earnest desire, and ver. 3, 4, 9, for his sorrow and mourning.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

*Use 1.* For instruction, two ways: first, The form of words and phrase here used shew a notable way to stir up and move compassion towards others—namely, to look upon and behold their miseries; for therefore, no doubt, doth David entreat the Lord to look upon his face, that the view of his mournful countenance might stir up compassion towards him: so Lam. i. 12, 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like my sorrow.'

*Use 2.* Secondly, See here that the favour of God is to the child of God a thing of high esteem, else the smallest sign thereof in a cheerful countenance and lovely look would not be so earnestly desired; indeed, with natural men it is not so; they say unto God, 'Depart from us; what can the Almighty do for us?' Job xxii. 17. But with the godly it is otherwise: Ps. xxx. 5, 'In his favour is life;' nay, Ps. lxxiii. 3, 'His loving kindness is better than life;' which made David to bid Zadok to bring back the ark of God unto his place, saying, 'If I have found favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation. But if he say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here I am, let him do to me as seemeth him good,' 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26.

*Use 3.* For admonition, it serves three ways: first,

To imitate David in our prayers, labouring in our very countenance to express truly the good affections of our hearts by mournful looks in confession of sins, as Ps. lv. 2, 'Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;' and by cheerful countenance in thanksgiving: so serving the Lord with a cheerful and glad heart for his good blessing, as Deut. xxviii. 47.

*Use 4.* Secondly, To learn of David how to stir up our hearts to charitable compassion towards them that be in misery—namely, exercise our senses upon the objects of mercy. Hitherto belongs the charge; Isa. lviii. 7, 'Hide not thyself from thine own flesh.' That was the uncharitable practice of the priest and Levite, to turn away from the wounded man. Luke x. 31–33.

*Use 5.* Thirdly, This must teach us, with David, to make high account of God's favour, esteeming it as our own life, as David. And for the sure obtaining of it, labour to be found in Christ, in whom only it is to be had; John xiv. 6, with Exek. xxxix. 29, 'Neither will I hide my face any more from them.' Also to beware of all sin, whereby it is certainly lost, as Deut. xxxi. 17, 18; Ezek. xxxix. 23, 24. And in particular, seeing the want of faith and obedience, the chief fruits of the word of the kingdom, cause God to take it from us, Mat. xxi. 43; therefore in special manner we must give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, &c.

The third thing to be noted here is, the reason or argument implied in the title which David gives to himself, to move God to shew favour unto him—namely, because he is the Lord's anointed. It is most true that the Son of God, the second person in Trinity, was at this time, and from the beginning of the world, in God's purpose and promise, the Lord's anointed, as he is called the lamb slain, Rev. xiii. 8, whereon he is called the *Messias*, or anointed, long before his incarnation, Dan. ix. 24, 25, whose coming was expected by all the Jews, as John iv. 25. And it may be David in this title had reference to his mediation, in whose alone merits and worthiness the godly in all ages have audience with God; as Dan. ix. 17, 'Cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary for the Lord's sake,' that is, for the Lord Christ Jesus' sake. And so from David we

must learn to beg all blessings of God for Christ's sake, as John xvi. 23, 24, with John xiv. 6. Yet withal we must know, that David styles himself God's anointed, with special reference to that high favour and honour whereto God had advanced him, when he anointed him by Samuel, to be king over his people, as 1 Sam. xvi. 12; Ps. lxxxix. 20, whereby he made him not only a type, but an honourable progenitor of Christ, as that same Psalm implies, ver. 26-29. And upon consideration of that great and extraordinary favour, he begs that which is less, even a gracious respect for freedom and liberty in God's holy sanctuary; as the next verse, which propounds the reason of his earnest desire, doth plainly import.

Mark, then, that because David was the Lord's anointed, therefore he begs that grace and favour to enjoy with freedom the ordinances of God in his holy sanctuary. To the same effect, he prays, Ps. cxxxii. 10, 'For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine anointed.'

The reason hereof is plain: first, Because the very external unction was an high honour and a rare favour: as is implied, 1 Sam. xv. 17, 'When thou wast small and little in thine own eyes, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?' But being joined with the thing signified, even the inward graces of the Spirit, as it was in David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2, where he is said to be the man that was raised up on high, the anointed of the Lord, indued with the Spirit; thus it did entitle him to God's special mercy, as Ps. lxxxix. 20, 28, 'God promised, saying, I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. My mercy will I keep for him for ever:' and David acknowledgeth, Ps. xviii. 50, 'Great deliverances giveth he to his king: he sheweth mercy to his anointed.'

Secondly, David propounds this motive to God, to bestow upon him this favour, because hereby he should be better enabled to walk worthy of the honour conferred upon him in his anointing: as see Isa. ii. 3, here God teacheth his ways for their enabling to walk in his paths.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

*Use 1.* For instruction, two ways: first, It lets us see a commendable property in the godly, to observe and mark God's favours towards them, for their better encouragement to depend upon him, and to pray unto him for further blessing: see 2 Sam. xvii. 34, 37, 'Thy servant kept his father's sheep,' &c.; Ps. lvi. 13, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling?' So did Samson in his great thirst, Judges xv. 18. This we should the rather mark for our example in following the godly herein, both because God requires it for our good: Ps. exi. 4, 'He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered;' and ver. 2, 'They are sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.' Micah vi. 5, 'Remember now, O my people, what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye might know the righteousness of the Lord.' And also blames those that forget his works and dealing towards them: as Ps. cvi. 7, 'Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea;' ver. 13, 'They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel;' ver. 21, 'They forgot God their Saviour.' For this good king Asa is blamed: 2 Chron. xvi. 8, 'Were not the Ethiopians,' &c.

*Use 2.* Secondly, Here behold a great prerogative and privilege of all the godly that be true believers, for they have ever in themselves, though not of themselves, but from the Lord, a comfortable ground of encouragement to go to God in prayer for any needful blessing; which is, beside his command and promise, Ps. l. 5, 15, the honour of holy unction; they are the Lord's anointed ones, though not with material oil, the use whereof ended in Christ, as all legal types did, Col. ii. 17; Heb. x. 6, yet with the graces of the Holy Ghost, which are spiritual oil, as John ii. 20, 27. By which they are 'made kings and priests unto God,' Rev. i. 6, 'an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ,' whereon they are called 'Christ's fellows,' Ps. xlv.: yea, Christ himself is 'not ashamed to call them brethren,' Heb. ii. 11. And so they are indeed by the grace of faith, as Gal. iii. 26; 1 John v. 1. Christ indeed hath the pre-eminence, for he is the natural Son, as he is the second

person in Trinity, the only begotten, John i. 14, and as incarnate, made man, the Son of God also, Mat. iii. 17, by the grace of personal union.

*Use 3.* For admonition, two ways to every one that would pray with comfort.

First, To make trial whether we be the Lord's anointed spiritually, which is, by endowment with such graces of the Spirit as declare us to be made of Christ priests unto God, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, which are: first, Ourselves in souls and bodies through faith in Christ, as Rom. vi. 13, 'Yield up yourselves unto God,' Rom. xii. 1, which is known by sanctification joined with profession of faith, as Rom. xv. 16.

Secondly, Our prayers and praises: as Ps. elx. 2, 'Let my prayer be set forth as incense;' and Heb. xiii. 15, 'The sacrifice of praise, the fruit of the lips;' or as Hosea xiv. 2, 'The calves of our lips.'

*Use 4.* Secondly, In the want of assurance of this honourable state, to give all diligence in the saving and holy use of God's means to attain unto it, which requires, first, Leaving the world, though not for habitation, yet for behaviour and condition; for the world receives not this anointing, John xiv. 17, whence Christ told his disciples he had chosen them out of the world, John xv. 19, meaning by his holy calling, whereto Paul exhorteth the Romans, chap. xii. 2, 'Fashion not yourselves,' &c. The world's fashion to be left is sin in general, 1 John v. 19, and in particular 'the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and pride of life,' 1 John ii. 16. Now this is by true repentance, whereon the Spirit is promised, Prov. i. 23, with Acts ii. 38. Secondly, Wait for this gift of the Spirit in the sacred ordinances of the word and prayer; the word, Acts x. 44; Gal. iii. 2; and prayer, Luke xi. 13, do herein as the people did at Bethesda, John v. 3, 4; yet let us look to the affections of our hearts towards this anointing in the use of means; for we must do it with an holy desire, Isa. xlv. 3, and ever join obedience with our endeavour, Acts v. 32.

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Ver. 10. *For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*

The prophet having sundry ways expressed his zealous affection towards the house of God: 1. By way of admiration, ver. 1. 2. By plain discovery of his affection, ver. 2. 3. By lamentation, ver. 3. 4. By instruction, touching the happiness of the priests and Levites, ver. 4. 5. By humble and earnest supplication for audience and favour to enjoy the blessings he so much desired, ver. 8, and 9, doth in this verse (to prevent the admiration of some, and the derision of others, who would account this holy longing to be but foolish dotting) render a good reason of his earnest affection towards the Lord's sanctuary, drawn from the surpassing benefit of time spent there above any other place in the world: 'For a day in thy courts,' saith he, 'is better than a thousand' anywhere else. Speaking of the sanctuary, as the spouse doth of Christ, Cant. v. 9, 10. To give a reason of her ardent affection toward him, she saith, 'He is the chiefest of ten thousand.' And because the greater number might perhaps be otherwise affected, therefore he doth make instance in himself, because he best knew his own heart, and plainly professeth that his affection did more cleave to the Lord's sanctuary than to any other place, saying, 'I had rather be a doorkeeper,' &c., like as Joshua had done before about the worship of the true God, Josh. xxiv. 15.

To begin with David's reason, it stands upon this ground: man's heart for earnest desire and delight should be there set, where most and best good is to be received; this is according to the apostle's counsel, 1 Cor. xii. 31, 'Covet earnestly the best gifts;' and 1 Thes. v. 21, 'Prove all things, hold that which is good.'

There *εὖ καλὸν* must needs sometimes be *καλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν*, for we must not only choose good before evil, but of diver's good things the best, as the very heathen have well prescribed.<sup>1</sup> Now the prophet David doth here assume, 'But a day in God's courts is better than a thousand elsewhere,' and therefore do I desire it.

In this, which the prophet assumeth, this must be remembered for the meaning, that by God's courts here is not meant heaven, the place of glory, but the place of his solemn worship here on earth, even his

<sup>1</sup> Tull. Off. lib. 1.



sanctuary, which to David's religious heart was heaven upon earth. And so the point to be observed is this :

That time bestowed in God's holy worship and service is better than a thousand times so much

spent elsewhere. This is here plainly affirmed, and to gain our more cheerful assent, mark the reasons following :

First, here only is the certain perfect cure of all spiritual evils and maladies in the soul.

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## A POSTSCRIPT BY THE PUBLISHER TO THE READERS.

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CHRISTIAN READERS,—Having drawn forth this Exposition of the 84th Psalm as far as the perfect copy of the author's own handwriting had carried it on, and having lost the hopes I had once of supplying what is wanting, on the three last verses, out of his other papers, I had an intent to undertake that task myself; but, upon further consideration, I have now resolved to let it alone, and leave it as I found it, rather than to fall under his censure that said, *Infelix operis summa*; and to owe them an answer who should ask a reason of the dissimilitude in the words of the poet, when he said, *Amphora caput institui, carente rotâ cur urecus erit?* For why should I strive, *non passibus æquis*, to follow him afar off whom I can have no hope to overtake! Such a master of this sacred art (rightly dividing the word of truth) he was, that it would be presumption in me to imagine, that what was left unfinished by him should be perfected by me. And for works of this nature to be published in this sort, is not without example amongst the writings either of ancient and modern authors. Besides, (if I be not mistaken,) both the matter and expressions in these three verses, either all or the most part, are such as you may find

handled either in the former verses of this psalm, or in the expositions of those other three, which it is intended shall be published together with this, viz., 27th, 85th, and 87th. As the former part of ver. 10, 'A day in thy courts is better than a thousand,' seems parallel to that of ver. 4, 'Blessed are they that dwell in thine house;' the latter part of the same verse, 'I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness,' unto the fourth verse of the 27th Psalm, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord,' &c. So the former part of ver. 11, 'The Lord God is a sun and a shield,' doth not differ much more from that of ver. 9, 'Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed,' than a profession doth from a petition, and mercy acknowledged from mercy desired. And the latter part of the same verse, 'No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,' what is it but the same with that of the 85th Psalm, vers. 12, 13, 'The Lord shall give that which is good, &c. The like I might say of the rest, but that I suppose this to be sufficient, if not more than needed. VALE.



TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL,  
MY TRULY NOBLE AND THRICE MOST HONOURED PATRON,

SIR ROBERT WHITNEY, Kt.

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IT is not unknown unto him, unto whose eyes all things are naked and opened, that a strong desire doth possess me (if it be not more proper to call it ambition) of offering to the present age, and leaving to posterity, some public evidence of that unfeigned thankfulness which I humbly acknowledge to be due unto you for your altogether undeserved, as well as unexpected at the first, and now little less than twenty years continued, favour, expressed, amongst many other particulars, by three several presentations unto such church-livings as were in your power to dispose of; and those not only so freely, but also so friendly, not granted, but offered, that, would the severest censurer of simony that ever was, choose of purpose a pattern in that particular for patrons perpetually to practise by, the world could not afford him any one that might more truly say than you can, *Nec precor, nec petio*. And of all the relations wherein men stand to one another, in that between ministers and their people, I think it is the greatest happiness when we can tell ourselves truly that it was not our own doing, but God's, by

the means of others, without any solicitation of our own, that brought us together. This hath been my comfort in many trials of affliction, and will be, I hope, my joy and my crown whenever God shall see it good to turn his hand upon me; and next, under him, I shall ascribe it unto you. And having long ago put on almost an obstinate resolution never to send mine own name to the press, (except it be, as now I do, to bring to light another man's labours,) I am glad I have such a good opportunity, that, whilst I am publishing some of his works, whose memory is not only precious with you and others unto whom he was known, but also like to last as long as orthodox Christian religion keeps footing in England, I may both honour one part with your name, and withal tell the world, what I hope you will believe, that I am,

Your Worship's most obliged orator, in  
the strictest bonds of all observant  
duty unfeignedly devoted,

CHRISTOPHER HARVEY.

THE

# CHURCH'S EXERCISE UNDER AFFLICTION;

OR,

## AN EXPOSITION OF PSALM LXXXV.

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PSALM LXXXV. *To the chief Musician. A psalm for the sons of Korah.*

Ver. 1. *Lord thou hast been favourable to thy laud ; thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.*

I have chosen to entreat of this psalm, as containing fitting matter unto our times and occasions ; wherein, as well the works of God's providence as the godly government and authority under which we live, do call us to the consideration both of former mercies and favours, as also of present evils and further dangers ; that, renewing our thankfulness for blessings received, and humbling our souls to beg of God the removal of judgments, both present and imminent, we may with better assurance wait upon God for the fruition of his blessings.

Answerable to all which, we have in this psalm, as a pattern showed us in God's holy mountain : first, The church's acknowledgment of God's favour and mercy in the removal of former evils, ver. 1-3. Secondly, Her humble and earnest prayer for the perfecting of that mercy begun, by the removal of some heavy judgments, which were renewed upon them for their sins, ver. 4-7. Thirdly, Her godly behaviour in waiting for mercy, in a gracious answer to her prayers, with the sure grounds thereof, ver. 8. &c.

These are the general parts of this psalm, which I will handle in order. But first a word or two of the title prefixed, which sheweth the dedication thereof to the chief musician, and pointeth out the persons that were specially to be employed in the singing thereof—namely, the sons of Korah.

The dedication is to the chief musician, or master of the choir. For, 1 Chron. xvi. 4, David ordered a choir to sing thanksgiving, and penned psalms for that end, which he delivered to the master of the choir, ver. 7. Of their ordering, see 1 Chron. xxv. 1-7.

The parties by whom it is to be used are the sons of Korah. These sons of Korah were the posterity of that rebellious Levite, who, with Dathan and Abiram, rebelled against Moses and Aaron, Num. xvi. ; which Korah was consumed with fire, ver. 35 with 17. Howbeit there were of his sons that died not, Num. xxvi. 11, departing, as it seemeth, from their father's tent, as all were commanded, Num. xvi. 24, 26. And of these is numbered a family of the Korathites, Num. xxvi. 58, of whom came Samuel the prophet, and Heman, his nephew, 1 Chron. vi. 33, a great singer, 1 Chron. xxv. 4, 5.

In this title observe two things : first, That God required joy and gladness in his service, which

David prepared, 1 Chron. xxiii. 5, and xxv. 1, and bids all his people to rejoice in their feasts, Deut. xvi. 11, 14, which feasts did represent the life of Christians. And in evangelical worship he requires making melody to the Lord in their hearts, Eph. v. 19.

The reason is great. For in God's service we have society with God, which is a just cause of exceeding joy. Herein God vouchsafeth evidence of special favour, and if we should take no delight therein, it argues fearful contempt, which God cannot endure without revenge, as Deut. xxviii. 47, 48, whereto add, Amos viii. 5, 11.

This should make us to stir up in our hearts, and to express in our behaviour, this spiritual joy in God's service. To this end we have need of the Spirit to sanctify us, which will make us to rejoice in God's word as one that finds a great spoil, Ps. cxix. 162, and conceiving it to be the food of our souls, labour to hunger and thirst after it, and then with Job shall we esteem it above our appointed food, Job xxiii. 12. And when we know God to be our God, and the fountain of blessings to us, we shall 'come before him with gladness' in prayer, Ps. c. 2; and 'our mouth shall praise him with joyful lips,' Ps. lxxiii. 5.

Secondly, Here note that the sons—that is, the posterity, of wicked and rebellious Korah, have an honourable place in God's sacred and solemn service, for to them sundry of David's psalms are commended, as Ps. xlii., xlv.—xlvi., &c., which is no small honour.

No doubt David saw them, being by place and birth Levites, to be faithful and diligent in their place, and thus renouws them to all posterity, that he composeth special psalms for their ministry in the solemn service of God.

Here see the verifying of God's word for the comfort of all godly children, that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, Ezek. xviii. 14, 17, 20, if he see his father's sins and turn from them.

*Obj.* Exod. xx. 5, 'Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.'

*Ans.* That is, inquiring for the sin of the fathers among the children, and, if he find it there, then pays he them home.

*Obj.* Achan's sons and daughters are stoned and burned for the father's sacrilege, Joshua vii. 24, 25. And Dathan's and Abiram's little children are swallowed up, Num. xvi. 27.

*Ans.* For aught we know, they might be of years of discretion, and privy to their father's stealth.

When little ones die in the punishment of their father's sin, God lays not the punishment of the father's sin upon the children, but, to make the father's sin more odious, doth then bring upon the children the fruit of their own original corruption, which is death determined upon all flesh, as Gen. ii. 17, with Rom. v. 12. As a creditor that hath both the father and the son debtors unto him, may, upon the father's provocation, lay the forfeiture upon both, being both in his danger.

Secondly, Here is special encouragement to the children of wicked parents to become godly and faithful in their places. In some sense they are the sons of strangers, for 'The wicked are estranged from the womb,' Ps. lxxiii. 3. Yet, if they leave their father's sins and become faithful to the Lord, here is comfort for them in the honour of Korah's posterity, see Isa. lvi. 3, 'Let not the son of the stranger, that joineth himself to the Lord, say, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people;' for, ver. 6, 7, 'The sons of strangers, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, shall be brought unto his holy mountain, and made joyful in his house of prayer;' for 'them that honour me I will honour, saith the Lord,' 1 Sam. ii. 30.

Thus much of the title, the psalm itself followeth.

Ver. 1. *Lord, thou hast been favourable to thy land: thou hast brought again the captivity of Jacob.*

In this and the two next verses are contained the church's acknowledgment of God's great favour and mercy, here propounded not only to testify their thankfulness for the blessings they enjoyed, but also to be a ground of encouragement unto their new requests, vers. 4-7; and so conceived, we may therein observe one thing in general, viz.—

That God's church doth think upon and acknowledge the blessings [they enjoy, though] they lie still in other things under some heavy judgments. Compare

the three first verses with the 4th and 5th, which will well agree either to the times of Ezra and Nehemiah—when, notwithstanding their return from Babylon, the people were in great distress at Jerusalem, as Neh. i. 3—or to the more heavy times, when Antiochus Epiphanes did tyrannise over them, as the book of Maccabees shews more at large, 1 Mac. i. 25, 36, &c. Like unto this is Ps. xlv. 1, &c., 'We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what works thou didst in their days, in the times of old,' &c. 'Thou hast saved us from our enemies, and put them to shame that hated us,' ver. 7. 'But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies,' ver. 9.

The reason is twofold: first, To shew themselves thankful for blessings received; for so God is honoured, Ps. l. 23, 'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me,' which is very profitable, as Luke xvii. 17-19.

Secondly, To lay a ground of assurance of deliverance in present evils; for hereby their hearts are settled in assurance of God's power, and further, in the love of his mercy: as appears by that of David, 1 Sam. xvii. 34, &c., 'The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.'

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, see a difference between the wicked and the godly under crosses and afflictions. The godly, we see here, doth guide his affairs with discretion; as he looks with one eye on God's present judgments, so with the other he beholds precedent mercies: see Job i. 21, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord;' and chap. ii. 10, 'What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' But the wicked are like Haman—all his honour is nothing, while Mordecai sits in the king's gate, Esther v. 13. The godly are like David, 1 Sam. xxx. 5, 6, who, when 'the people spake of stoning him,' 'encouraged himself in the Lord his God;' but the wicked are like Nabal in distress, whose 'heart died within him, and he became as a stone,' 1 Sam. xxv. 37; or like Saul, that, when God would not answer him, consulted with a witch, 1 Sam. xxviii. 7, 'Seek me a woman that

hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her and inquire.'

For admonition, labour to become followers of God's church and people in this godly behaviour. We have just cause so to do in this land, every true member of God's church. God's favour hath been great unto us, in preventing the designs of our enemies, and in withdrawing the heavy judgment of plague and pestilence from our brethren, and that not once alone, but often: the remembrance of which mercies no present judgments should be able to deprive us of.

Now, particularly in the church's acknowledgment of God's great favour and mercy to them, we have sundry things to note:—

First, The prophet calls Judea, wherein the people of Israel dwelt, God's land, 'Thou hast been favourable to *thy land*;' so Ps. x. 16, 'The Lord is king for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of *his land*,'—that is, the Canaanites and the rest of the nations that once possessed it are now destroyed. Jer. ii. 7, 'Ye defiled *my land*, and made mine heritage an abomination.' Ezek. xxxvi. 5, God is angry with all those heathen that appoint his land into their possession; and ver. 20, 'These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land.' Chap. xxxvi. 5, 'I will bring thee against my land.' Hosea ix. 3, 'They shall not dwell in the Lord's land.' Joel i. 6, 'A nation is come upon my land.'

The reason, or ground hereof, is threefold. First, God chose this land for his own people, wherein he promised to dwell among them: see Lev. xxvi. 11; Ps. xlvii. 4, xlviii. 1-3, and lxxvi. 1, 2; Ezek. xx. 6, and xxxvii. 26.

Secondly, He became king over this land, Zech. xiv. 9; 'Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion,' Ps. cxiv. 2.

Thirdly, He undertook to be protector and blesser of this land, and that in an extraordinary manner, as Deut. xi. 11, 12, 'The land, whither thou goest to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, &c. A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it.' Experience whereof may be seen by example, 1 Sam. vii. 10-12; 2 Kings xix. 32, 33.

In these respects the land of Jewry was, as it were,

God's peculiar enclosure, hedged in from his commons, which was the whole earth.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, it shews plainly that some lands and people have a privilege above others, for sure title and interest unto the true God,—namely, those that do receive, believe, and obey the word of the covenant, as did the Jews under the law, and all Christian nations under the gospel. It is true that, by creation and common providence, all lands and all people are the Lord's, as Ps. l. 12, 'The world is mine, and the fulness thereof;' yet they only are his by bond of covenant, and so entitled to his special mercies, that truly receive, believe, and obey his holy word, see Exod. xix. 5, 6; Deut. x. 14, 15; Ps. lxxv. 1.

For admonition it serves two ways. First, To those that as yet are without, not called nor brought into the bond of the covenant with God, that, if ever they desire true happiness for their souls, they labour to become rightly entitled to the true God by special covenant through Christ Jesus; for 'happy are the people that have the Lord for their God,' Ps. cxliv. 15. Now, for this end, they themselves must seek unto God's ministers, and say, as a man of Macedonia did unto Paul in a vision, 'Come and help us,' Acts xvi. 9; they must inquire of them, as the eunuch did of Philip, 'I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this?' Acts viii. 34. Nay, they must study in the word themselves, and search the Scriptures daily, by the example of the noble Bereans, Acts xvii. 11. And, above all, they must desire of God that he will teach them to do that which is pleasing unto him, as Ps. cxliii. 10.

Secondly, To us in this land, who, by our holy profession, do entitle ourselves to the true God, and say, as Ps. xlviii. 14, 'This God is our God for ever.' We must look unto it, that we do truly and sincerely receive, believe, and obey the word of the covenant, and take heed of those things which tend to separate between God and his people. Amongst which, we are most in danger of these two: first, The idolatry of popery; secondly, Profaneness in Christianity. Popery is a false faith; and profaneness in the profession of the true religion argues a dead faith.

For popery, it is at this day, amongst God's

people, in comparison of true religion, as the worship of the golden calves, erected by Jeroboam at Dan and Bethel, was to the true worship appointed by God himself at Jerusalem, 1 Kings xii. 26, 28, 29, &c.

For papists worship God in images, as they did; now, the danger thereof see 2 Chron. xv. 13, Israel without a true God; and chap. xxv. 7, 'The Lord is not with Israel.' Therefore, if we desire the continuance of this privilege, to have our land to be God's land, we must set ourselves against popery; lament and repent that it hath any corner and closet by allowance amongst us; yea, we must, by prayer to God, seek the removal of it. Consider Ps. lxxxi. 8, 9, 'Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; there shall no strange God be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange God.'

Then, for profaneness among the professors of true religion, this argues a dead faith: for such deny the power of true religion, 2 Tim. iii. 5. Now, God's kingdom is 'not in word but in power,' 1 Cor. iv. 20; and this is a spreading evil amongst us, as God's judgments shew: see Jer. xxiii. 10, 'The land is full of adultery, and because of oath the land mourns;' also Hosea iv. 1-3, 'The Lord hath a controversy with the land,' &c.

The same sins are rife amongst us, whereof we must take special regard against the day of humiliation.

For comfort, this makes greatly to any land or people that keep covenant with God, when they are oppressed with idolatrous enemies or wicked men, as usually the true church is. They must remember their interest in the true God, and in the time of danger, with Hezekiah, Isa. xxxvii. 6, 29, humble themselves in earnest prayer, and, with Jehoshaphat, fast and pray, 2 Kings xx. 3, 4, 12, and then they shall receive a gracious answer, as he did, ver. 14, and good success, as Abijah did, 2 Chron. xiii. 8, 10, 12.

Secondly, Note here, as taken for granted, that Jacob—that is, the Jews, who were the posterity of Jacob—had been taken captive: for the church's thankfulness for their bringing back is an acknowledgment of their carrying out.

The truth hereof is manifest by plain and manifold

relation in the holy story, see 2 Kings xxiv. 10, 11; Dan. i. 1, 2; for the beginning of it, in part, in the reign of Jehoiakim; and for the accomplishment thereof, see 2 Kings xxv. 2, 8, 11; Jer. xxxix. 2, 3, &c., and lii. 4, &c.

The reason hereof was their grievous sins against God: Lam. i. 8, 'Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore she is removed,' according to God's threatening, Lev. xxvi. 14, 15, 25, 33; Deut. xxviii. 15, 20; Jer. xvi. 10, 'Wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us?' ver. 11, 'Thou shalt say, Because your fathers have forsaken me;' ver. 12, 'And ye have done worse than your fathers;' ver. 13, 'Therefore will I cast you out of this land.'

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, see plainly that God's own people, for the sins committed against him, may lie under most heavy and grievous judgments, as here we see they are led into captivity: among whom were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Dan. i.; also Mordecai and Esther, chap. ii. 5, 6; yea, Zerubabel and Joshua; yea, see Ps. xlv. 9, 10, &c., to the 18th.

For admonition, two ways: first, To beware of rash judgment, either against ourselves or others, for the grievous calamities that lie upon us and them; for God saith, 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous,' Ps. xxxiv. 19; 'Whosoever will live godly must suffer persecution,' 2 Tim. iii. 12; 'Through manifold afflictions we must enter into the kingdom of heaven,' Acts xiv. 22.

Secondly, Hereby learn to know to repent of for the time past, and to beware of for the time to come, those sins that brought the captivity: which are these: In general, the transgressing of God's commandments, as Lev. xxvi. 14, 15, 25. In particular, idolatry, 2 Chron. vii. 19, 20; Sabbath-breaking, Neh. xiii. 15-17; covetousness, Jer. vi. 12, 13; sowing teaching, Jer. vi. 14, &c.

For comfort to the godly in the times of their great affliction, consider that nothing befalls thee which hath not lit on God's dear children, whatever thine affliction be, whether inward in mind, or outward in body, see 1 Cor. 10, 13. Consider the state of Job, chaps. i., ii.; and of David, Ps. lxxxvii.

2. 4. 'My soul ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak; yet I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice, and he gave ear unto me,' ver. 1. Consider also the restoration of Israel in this text, and Zeph. iii. 14, &c.; Isa. xii. 1, &c., and liv. 1, &c.; Micah iv. 6, 7.

The third particular thing to be here observed, is expressed—namely, that God brought back his people that had been led into captivity. This is plain, for the captivity of Babylon, in the first and second chapters of Ezra, where both time, and means, and persons that did return, are set down particularly, and at large.

The reason hereof is twofold: first, and chiefly, In God, who of mere grace and favour undertook this great work, and bound himself thereto by promise: see Jer. xxvii. 22, 'They shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be, until the day that I visit them; then will I bring them up, and restore them to this place.' Jer. xxix. 10, 'After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place.' 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 'Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,' &c.

Secondly, God herein had respect to the godly behaviour of his children in true repentance and earnest prayer, wherunto he did enable them by his grace, that so he might perform his good word unto them. For that was Solomon's request, at the dedication of the temple, 2 Chron. vi. 36-38, assented unto, chap. vii. 1, by sign of fire consuming the sacrifice, and by voice, ver. 12, 'I have heard thy prayer.' And so we find that Daniel did, chap. xi., according as God had said the godly should do: Jer. xxix. 12, &c., 'Then shall you call upon me, and go, and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me; I will be found of you, and turn away your captivity.'

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, two ways: first, See that God



doth actually for his church 'exceeding abundantly, above all that men can ask or think,' Eph. iii. 20, with Ps. cxvii. 1, 'When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.' Such was Peter's deliverance, both to himself, and others of the church, Acts xii. 9, 15, 16.

Secondly, Here see a plain difference between God's dealing with his own people and with the wicked, when he enters into judgment with them. His people, we see here, do return, but the wicked are cut off, and cast off for ever: Isa. xxvii. 7, 8, 'Hath he smitten him as he smote those that smote him?' &c.

For admonition, two ways: first, To the wicked, that they insult not over God's children in their affliction and misery; for God will one day restore comfort to his children, and judge the wicked: see Micah vii. 8, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.' And for judging the wicked, see Ps. cxxxvii. 7-9, and Zeph. ii. 8, 9.

Secondly, To the godly in affliction, that they be not dismayed with any terror, for peace and deliverance shall come, see Ps. xxxiii. 4; James v. 7, 11; Acts ii. 24. Christ now is made both Lord and king, though once crucified, Acts ii. 36; 'Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead,' Rom. i. 4.

Ver. 2. *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast covered all their sin.* *Selah.*

Here the prophet proceeds in the further acknowledgment of God's favour to his people, and doth instance, in this great blessing, the remission and forgiveness of their sins, which were the cause of his judgments that formerly lit upon them.

In expressing whereof he useth variety of phrase, for the greater comfort of his people; intimating thus much, that whether their sins were small or great, yet God had pardoned them, and hid them out of his sight.

In this confession note two things: the first implied, That God's own people have their iniquities and their sins: the second expressed, That

God forgives the iniquity of his people, and covers all their sins.

For the first, God's own people, that are his by covenant, have their iniquities and their sins: 2 Chron. vi. 36, 'If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not.)' Prov. xx. 9, 'Who can say, I have made mine heart clean: I am pure from my sin?' Eccles. vii. 20, 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.' James iii. 2, 'In many things we sin all.' 1 John i. 8, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' Consider the best that have lived, Noah, Abraham, Job, Moses, David, Peter, &c., who, though they were most worthy men, yet were not pure and free from sin.

The reason hereof is their original corruption, furthered by the malice of Satan, and the deceitfulness of the world.

And touching this corruption, which is in every man the seed of his sin, thus much we must know, that it is in God's people in a different manner and measure according to their estate before God. For among God's people, some are his by a general calling only, and outward profession, and in them corruption reigneth; for the grace they have as yet is restraining only, which keepeth them from the servitude of some gross sins only. Others are his also by effectual calling and inward sanctification; in whom, though corruption do not reign, and hold them captive under the bondage of sin, yet doth it remain in them, and allure and draw them many a time to commit iniquity and sin.

Thus much Paul confesseth, speaking of himself regenerate, Rom. vii. Now there he saith, to express the strength of his corruption remaining, 'What I hate, that do I,' ver. 15; now then, 'It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing. The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that do I. I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind,' &c., ver. 17-19, 23.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, two ways: first, That original sin is not quite taken away by baptism. True it is, they that rightly believe in the Lord Jesus, and are

regenerate by the Holy Ghost, are both freed from the guilt of original sin, and have corruption, though not quite removed, yet so weakened and lessened that sin shall not reign in them: yet some part thereof remains, and thence proceed actual transgressions, as St Paul confesseth, Rom. vii. 21.

Secondly, Here see the error of the more ancient heretics, as the Catharists, the Novatians, and Donatists, who held a man might live in a state of purity and perfection in life: from whom the papists do not much differ, who do not only hold the total removal of original corruption by baptism, but also that the child of God may keep God's commandments. For proof whereof they urge I John ii. 4, and do instance in Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke i. 6: but they err, mistaking evangelical obedience there spoken of, as though it were legal.

For admonition two ways: first, To the wicked, that they beware of the common stumbling-block wherewith many natural men do fall, that is, to dislike true religion because of the faults and sins of those that be the professors of it. For God's people have their iniquities, they have their sins.

There is a woe to them that give that offence, yet thou shalt not be excused that takest it: for, 'woe be to the world because of offences,' Mat. xxiii. 7.

Secondly, The godly have hence to consider their estate of subjection to commit iniquity and sin, that thereby they may be moved to daily repentance for their sins past, and to watchfulness against sins to come: for which end they must remember Christ's charge of pulling out the right eye, &c., Mat. v. 29, 30, and beware of the sins which their constitution of body, and their calling or state of life doth tempt them unto; for there especially is this right eye that must be plucked out, and right hand that must be cut off. And against all sin we must labour daily to 'put on the whole armour of God,' prescribed Eph. vi. 12, 14, 16; and also ever labour to weaken corruption, and to renew and strengthen grace in our souls: for which end we must be much exercised and conversant in the word and prayer.

For comfort, it makes greatly to those that be in Christ Jesus, and yet be troubled for their iniquities and for their sins.

*Quest.* Wherein then do they differ from natural men?

*Ans.* In the servitude of sin, whereto natural men give themselves willingly and with delight, if they may so do with safety from men's laws; but the child of God is grieved for them, and doth watch against them, and strive to leave them, and so walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, whereby he is freed from condemnation in Christ, though he be not quite cleared from his own corruption, Rom. viii. 1, with vii. 24, 25.

The thing here expressed is, that God forgives the iniquity of his people, and covers all their sins. When God describes himself to Moses, he makes this a part of his name, one of his special properties, to 'forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin,' Exod. xxxiv. 7: 'The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression,' Num. xiv. 18: 'Who forgiveth all thine iniquity,' Ps. ciii. 3.

The reason hereof is principally in God, even his mercy and truth, which go before his face, Ps. lxxxix. 14. Mercy moves him to pity those that be in misery, as all are that stand guilty of sin: and therefore he is said to 'pardon iniquity, and to pass by transgression, and not to retain his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy,' Micah vii. 18.

Also, his truth causeth him to perform covenant with those that be his people in Christ; which is to pardon their sins, for the merit of his death and passion, when they do repent and beg mercy and pardon, whereunto he doth enable them, and excite and stir them up by his word and works: as Lev. xxvi. 40-42, 'If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, &c. If then their un-circumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember my covenant,' &c. Likewise, Jer. xxxii. 39, &c., 'I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them, &c. So will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.'

*Quest.* Why doth Moses say, 'He will not pardon your transgressions?' Exod. xxxiii. 21; and Joshua, 'He is a jealous God, and will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins?' Joshua xxiv. 19.

*Ans.* The circumstances of those places shew the true meaning—namely, if men provoke him, and forsake him by idolatry, serving other gods: and if

they sin presumptuously, despising the word; so Num. xv. 30, 31, 'The soul that doth aught presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.'

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, two ways: first, It shews the excellency of the true God above all false gods; as Micah vii. 18, 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?' Yea, and above all creatures; for 'who can forgive sin, but God only?' Mark ii. 7; which will better appear, if we consider the way which God makes for the satisfying of his justice in this work of mercy—namely, he gives his Son to become man, that so he may be righteousness and redemption to his people. 1 Cor. i. 30; and gives his gospel to reveal that mercy, 2 Tim. i. 10; and his Holy Spirit, to teach and sanctify the souls of his elect, and to furnish them with those graces that may entitle them to God's mercy in Christ, Zech. xii. 10; 2 Cor. iv. 13. That the Ephesians might have the knowledge hereof, Paul bowed his knees to God, Eph. iii. 14, 18.

Secondly, See here a prerogative of God's people above all others; for they that stand rightly in covenant with God are the proper subject of this great blessing, to have from God the pardon of their sins, wherein, we know, stands true happiness. Ps. xxxii. 1, 2; and in that regard especially, though not only, are those people said to be blessed above others, that have the Lord for their God, Ps. cxliv. 15, and xxxiii. 12.

For admonition, two ways: first, To all natural men that are yet strangers from the covenant of grace, as wanting true faith and true repentance, that they give all diligence to the blessing of forgiveness of sins from God: see Esther viii. 17, 'Many of the people of the land became Jews' upon the view of a temporal blessing. Rahab embraced the Jews' religion, upon the notice of God's power and mercy in the delivery of Israel out of Egypt, &c., Joshua ii. 9, &c. And shall not we, upon evidence

of greater power and mercy, be induced to enter into covenant with God?

*Object.* But what is this to us? we are all in covenant with God already.

*Ans.* As 'he is not a Jew that is one outwardly,' &c., Rom. viii. 28, 29, so, Rev. iii. 1, 'Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.' Consider Simon Magus, Acts viii. 13, 21, 22, though said to believe, and be baptized, yet 'in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity,' see Ps. xciv. 20, and 1 John i. 6.

Secondly, God's own people must hereby learn to fear and love the true God. For fear, see Ps. cxxx. 4, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;' and for love, Luke vii. 47, 'Many sins are forgiven her; for she loved much.'

Now true fear makes a man eschew evil, Job i. 1; Prov. viii. 13, and xiv. 27; and true love moves to obedience in keeping God's word, as John xiv. 21, 23; 1 John v. 3. Yea, they must with David pray against presumptuous sins, Ps. xix. 13, and give themselves daily to the exercises of faith and repentance, which entitle them truly to this blessing of forgiveness.

For comfort, it makes greatly to God's children that do repent and believe in God through Christ, for then this prerogative belongs unto them, wherein stands true happiness; even as 'David also [describeth the blessedness of the men unto whom God] imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;' Rom. iv. 6, 7, 'Son, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee.'

Ver. 3. *Thou hast taken away all thy wrath; thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.*

The last effect of God's favour to his people here acknowledged, for the understanding whereof we must search out two things: first, Whether wrath and fierce anger be in God properly, for they are often ascribed unto God in Scripture; secondly, In what sense they are ascribed unto God.

For the first; Wrath and fierce anger are strong, sudden passions and perturbations of the mind, caused by things offensive and displeasing. Now, to speak properly, they are not in God, as Isa. xxvii. 4, 'Fury is not in me.'

For the second; the Scripture, speaking of God by way of resemblance unto men, ascribeth these passions to God for two causes: first, To acquaint us with the inward constant disposition of his nature against sin—namely, that he distasteth and disliketh the impurity and impiety thereof, as man doth the most hateful things. Secondly, To let us know the course of his actions in punishing sin—namely, that it shall be with that severity which men use when they are angry: Exod. xxxii. 10, 'Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them.'

Here then there are two things to be observed. The first is implied, That in the sense before shewed, God hath been wroth and fiercely angry with his own people: 'When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel;' he was 'wroth with his inheritance.' Ps. lxxviii. 59, 62; 'The wrath of the Lord was kindled against his people, inasmuch that he abhorred his own inheritance,' Ps. cvi. 40.

The reason hereof is the sins of his people, which many times are many and grievous, such as the holy nature of God cannot but detest, and in divine justice severely punish. For sin is the provocation; 2 Kings xxii. 13, 'For great is the wrath of the Lord which is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book.' 'Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed.' Lam. i. 8. And, 'We have transgressed and rebelled: thou hast not pardoned. Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us,' Lam. iii. 42, &c.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, two ways: first, Here we may plainly see the contrariety of sin to the holy nature of God. It is such a thing as God cannot endure; no, not in those that be most near and dear unto him, even his own people. Nay, when his own Son takes upon himself our sins, divine justice will not spare him; God's heavy wrath makes him to sweat water and blood, and to cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mat. xxvii. 46.

Secondly, See that God is a God of justice against sin; he will not wink at it nor endure it, no, not in his own people: though that be a great privilege, to be in covenant with God, yet that

procures not a dispensation to sin freely: much less will other outward things, as worldly wealth, and strength, and honour, and the like.

For admonition, to all God's people, that they beware of all sin, and especially of those that are said in Scripture to provoke the Lord to wrath, whereof I will name some of the chief.

1. As, first, Atheism: Zeph. i. 12, 'I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.'

2. Idolatry: Ps. lxxviii. 58, 59, 'They provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel.'

3. Witchcraft: see it in Manasseh. 2 Kings xxi. 2, 3, 6, 'He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, &c. He made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger;' with 2 Kings xxiii. 26, 'His anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal.'

4. Opposing Christ in the gospel, not receiving it: Ps. ii. 1-5, 'Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure;' 1 Thes. ii. 16, 'Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always;' for 'the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.' Typified in the spies and people disliking the land of Canaan, Num. xiv. 11, 23.

5. False and flattering teaching: Jer. v. 30, 31, 'A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?' So Ezek. xiii. throughout.

6. Lukewarmness, opposed to zeal: Rev. iii. 16, 19, 'Because lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will

spue thee out of my mouth. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; he zealous therefore, and repent.'

7. Blessing a man's self in his sinful course: Deut. xxix. 19, 20, 'If it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man,' &c.

8. Rebellion against God's magistrates and ministers: Num. xvi. 30, 'Then shall ye understand that men have provoked the Lord.'

9. Helping the wicked: 2 Chron. xix. 2, 'Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord.'

10. Oppression of the poor: Zeph. iii. 1, 3, 8, 'Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city. Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves. Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; to pour out upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.'

11. Adultery: Jer. v. 7-9, 'When I fed them to the full they committed adultery, &c. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord. Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?'

12. Drunkenness: Isa. v. 21, 24, 'Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink. Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people,' &c.

13. Blasphemy against God, either in common swearing, or in more fearful perjury: see Jer. xxiii. 10, 'Because of swearing the land mourneth, the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up.' And for perjury, it puts upon God the person of the devil, by calling him to be a witness of a lie, whereof the devil is the father, John viii. 44.

All these we must lay to heart; lament and repent for that which is past, and for the time to come beware of them, if we look to remove and prevent the wrath and fierce anger of the Lord.

The second to be here observed is expressed: That, though God had been fiercely angry with his people, yet afterward he took away his wrath, and

turned from the fierceness of his anger; so Jer. xxix. 10, 11, 'After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you,' &c.; chap. xxx. 17, 18, 'I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds. I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents,' &c.

The reason hereof was not any merit or worthiness in them, but indeed God's own mercy and work of grace, bringing them by his judgments to be humbled, and by his graces to repent, to pray, and to rely upon him for deliverance: see Ezek. xxxvi. 32, compared with ver. 25, &c., to 31, according to the promise, Deut. xxx. 1-4.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, it doth acquaint us with the gracious disposition and sweet mercy of God towards his children: 'His anger endureth but a moment,' Ps. xxx. 5. 'He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever,' Ps. ciii. 9.

For admonition, consider what it is in us that turns away God's anger, that so we may conscionably exercise ourselves therein. As, first, True and unfeigned repentance, whereby we consider our own ways in our hearts, confess our sins with godly sorrow, and turn from the evil of them: Jer. xviii. 7, 8, 'At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them;' Ezek. xviii. 30, 'Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions: so iniquity shall not be your ruin.' Even Ahab's legal repentance turned away a temporal judgment for a time, 1 Kings xxi. 29.

Secondly, Earnest and effectual prayer for mercy and deliverance, Joel i. 14, and ii. 16, 17, 'Gather the people, &c. Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people.' There it is commanded, and was notably practised by Moses, Deut. ix. 25, 26, &c.; Ps. cvi. 23.

Thirdly, Justice must be exercised in the punishment of sinners that provoke God's wrath, as did Phinehas on Zimri and Cozbi, Ps. cvi. 29, 30, and Jonah, that troubled the ship, was cast into the sea, and so it was calm, chap. i. 12, 15.

For comfort to the godly in trouble and affliction ; for peace shall come : Ps. xxxiv. 19. 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all;' Ps. cxii. 4. 'Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness;' Ps. xxxvii. 37. 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright : for the end of that man is peace.'

Ver. 4. *Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.*

In this verse and the three next we have the second part of this psalm, containing the church's petitions and complaints about the great miseries that yet lay heavy on them. The petitions are propounded in this fourth verse and the seventh: the complaints are inserted between them, vers. 5, 6.

This fourth verse contains two requests: first, That God would turn them; secondly, That he would cause his anger toward them to cease: both which blessings they beg of the true God, whom they call the God of their salvation—that is, the God who saves and delivers them from the evils and miseries that lie upon them.

Here, then, in this verse we have to note both to whom they pray, and for what. They pray to God, whom they call the God of their salvation; and therein we have two things to be observed: first, What God is to his church—namely, the God of their salvation; secondly, What they do to God in that regard—namely, pray unto him for that blessing.

For the first, note, God is the God of salvation to his church: Ps. iii. 8. 'Salvation belongeth unto the Lord;' Ps. lxxviii. 19, 20. 'Blessed be the Lord, the God of our salvation.' 'He that is our God is the God of salvation.' The word in the original is of the plural number, shewing that all manner of salvation belongs to God, both of body and soul, temporal and eternal, in this world and in the world to come; so Ps. lxxiv. 12. 'God is my king of old, working *salvations* in the midst of the earth.' See admirable instance of temporal saving, Exod. xiv. 13, &c., of Israel at the Red Sea; and Dan. iii. 17, 27, 28, of the three servants of God out of the fiery furnace; and undoubted assurance of eternal, Titus iii. 4, 5; Rev. xix. 1; Mat. i. 21, Jesus 'shall save his people from their sins;' and this is 'the great salvation,' Heb. ii. 3.

The reason hereof is God's power and mercy, which in him are infinite; as we may see, for power, Ps. cxv. 3, and cxxxvi. 6. 'Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth: in the seas and in all deep places.' And for his mercy, it is as large: Ps. cxix. 64. 'The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy;' Ps. cxlv. 9. His 'tender mercies are over all his works.' Now both these God doth put forth for those that be truly in covenant with him: as Exod. xxxiii. 19. 'I will make my goodness pass before thee;' Ps. lxxxix. 17. 'Thou art the glory of their strength, and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.'

*Object.* 1. But sometimes God's people are not saved from temporal evils: as Ps. lxxxix. 1, 2, &c., 'O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven,' &c.

*Ans.* Outward and bodily safety is but a temporal blessing, and thereof must be understood with exception of the cross; so as when God will either correct them for their sins, or make trial of his graces in them, then they may want outward safety. But 'though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is preserved and renewed day by day,' 2 Cor. iv. 16; nay, their eternal glory is hereby increased, ver. 17; as Rev. vii. 9, 14, an infinite number 'clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, came out of great tribulation.'

*Object.* 2. But the Scripture acknowledgeth other saviours beside the true God, both for temporal and eternal salvation, as Judges ii. 16, for temporal; and Obadiah, ver. 21; Ps. xxi. 1; 1 Tim. iv. 16, for eternal.

*Ans.* Understand them to be instrumental saviours under God, not sole or principal, as 1 Cor. iii. 5, 9. And know that it pleaseth God sometime to ascribe the effect to the instrument, as James v. 20, to teach us not to contemn the means, which is a fearful tempting of God, as Acts xiii. 46, and otherwhile to deny it to the means, as 1 Cor. iii. 6, that we should not trust in it: Ps. xlv. 3, 6, 7. 'They got not the land in possession with their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance.' 'For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.'

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, see the prerogative of God's church and people above all other states and conditions in the world; they being by covenant the people of God, have him to be unto them the God of salvation: see Deut. xxxii. 31, 'Their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges;' Jer. iii. 23, 'Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel.'

Secondly, See here the impiety of popery, that sets up other saviours among them than the true God, both for temporal and spiritual safety.

For admonition two ways: first, To take heed of those sins that deprive a people of this prerogative, to have the true God to be the God of their salvation. And those are especially two: first, Idolatry; when men either worship a false God, as the heathen did and do, or else worship the true God in a false manner, as did Jeroboam and his successors, 1 Kings xii. 28, and as the papists do at this day: for which sin see God forsaking, Judges iii. 8, compared with x. 13, 'Ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more.' Secondly, Impiety: when men 'hold the truth in unrighteousness,' Rom. i. 18; 'Have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof,' 2 Tim. iii. 5; 'For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power,' 1 Cor. iv. 20.

Secondly, We must all labour to become such as are truly entitled to God's power and mercy for salvation, that he which is the God of salvation may become our God: for assurance whereof we must look to these things:

First, That we become the children of Abraham; for to such salvation comes, Luke xix. 9. Now such may be known by doing the works of Abraham, John viii. 39. He is the father of the faithful, Rom. iv. 11, who by faith, first, Forsook his own people and his father's house, Heb. xi. 8, 9, compared with Gen. xii. 1, 4; secondly, Commanded his household to serve God, Gen. xviii. 19; thirdly, Made intercession to God for the sparing of Sodom, no doubt for the elect's sake that he hoped had been therein, Gen. xviii. 23, &c.; fourthly, By faith

offered his own son, yea, his only son Isaac, for an offering upon God's command, Gen. xxi. 1, &c.; Heb. xi. 17. In all these we must labour to show ourselves to be the sons of Abraham. Consider all, and look especially at the mortification of corruption, the sins of our hearts and souls: see Rom. viii. 12; Gal. v. 24; Col. iii. 5. We should be ashamed to hear that we love our sins better than Abraham did his only son.

Secondly, The true God is a Saviour unto every one that is a true member of Christ's body, Eph. v. 23. Now true members are joined to their head by the Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 13, and by virtue thereof receive life and sense from Christ spiritually, as Rom. viii. 11. Now such with Christ—1. Leave the grave of sin, Rom. vi. 17, 18; 2. They converse with the godly, Acts x. 40, 41; 3. They walk in the Spirit, Gal. v. 25; 4. They talk and speak religiously, Col. iv. 6; Prov. xxxi. 26; 5. They taste spiritual food with delight, the word and sacraments.

Thirdly, God will save those that trust in him, Ps. xvii. 7, and xci. 1, &c.; they 'shall be as mount Zion,' Ps. cxxv. 1. Now they that trust in the Lord will not use unlawful means to help themselves out of misery, but will wait his leisure, as Isa. xxviii. 16, 'He that believeth shall not make haste.'

Fourthly, He that would be delivered by God must be upright-hearted, Ps. vii. 10. Now such lean not to sin, but, as Isa. xxxviii. 3, can say to God, with Hezekiah, 'Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.'

For comfort to God's children in trouble and misery, they have a Saviour and deliverer, see Ps. xxiii. 1, 4; and Dan. iii. 17.

The second point to be here observed is the practice of the church towards God in their trouble,—namely, they go to God in prayer for salvation and deliverance: see Ps. 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;' and Ps. lxxx. 1, 3, 'Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph as a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth. Turn

us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved;’ Ps. cxviii. 5, ‘I called upon the Lord in distress,’ &c.

The reasons which induce them to do so are these :

First, God’s command : Ps. l. 15, ‘Call upon me in the day of trouble.’

Secondly, God’s property to hear and help : Ps. lxxv. 2, ‘Oh thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come;’ Ps. xlvi. 1, ‘God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble;’ see this in the heathen mariners, Jonah i. 14, 15.

Thirdly, God stands bound by promise and covenant to hear and help his church in distress : see 2 Chron. vii. 14, ‘If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land;’ Ps. xci. 15, ‘He shall call upon me, and I will answer him : I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him.’

Fourthly, Observation of the success of this duty in others before them, as Ps. xxxii. 3-6, i. 3-5, and xcix. 6, 8, 9; and in their own persons, as Ps. lvi. 13, ‘Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling?’

First, This serves to discover a threefold impiety as contrary to the practice of the church, of atheists, witches, and idolaters. 1. Atheists in their hearts say there is no God, and therefore make no conscience of this practice of the church to call upon God : see Ps. xiv. 1, 4, ‘The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.’ They call not upon God : Ps. x. 4, ‘God is not in all his thoughts.’ Job xxi. 15, ‘What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?’ Job xxii. 17, ‘Which say unto God, Depart from us : and what can the Almighty do for them?’ 2. Witches, wizards, and conjurers, for a show and colour, may have the name of God in their mouths, but sure the alliance of their hearts is in the devil; with him they are in league and society; all their spells, charms, circles, and incantations are prayers, homage, and service done to him. And like unto these, though not in so high degree,

are all they that seek unto them and use their help : Isa. viii. 19, ‘When they shall say unto you, Seek unto those that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter, should not a people seek unto their God?’ When Ahaziah, king of Israel, sent unto Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, to inquire whether he should recover of his disease, the Lord by Elijah tells his messengers, ‘Is it not because there is not a God in Israel that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron?’ 2 Kings i. 2, 3. Lastly, Idolaters say to saints and idols, Hear us, help us, pray for us, as 1 Kings xviii. 26. This we know is the common practice of papists to the Virgin Mary and to all the saints. But herein they shew themselves not to be God’s people, but such as have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out broken cisterns that can hold no water, Jer. ii. 11-13.

For admonition, that we observe and remember this practice of the church of God, and conscientiously endeavour to conform ourselves thereto; in the day of our trouble to seek the Lord, remember God and complain, as Ps. lxxvii. 2, 3; to say with the godly man, ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee?’ Ps. lxxiii. 25; and with the church, Isa. lxiii. 16, ‘Though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not : thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.’ Ps. xx. 7, ‘Some trust in chariots, and some in horses : but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.’ Hosea xiv. 3, ‘Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses : neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods : for in thee the fatherless find mercy.’ Consider the reasons of this duty, as before, and the success, as Ps. xx. 8, ‘They are brought down and fallen : but we are risen, and stand upright.’ Ps. cxvii. 5, &c., ‘I called upon the Lord in distress : the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place,’ &c.

Thus much of him to whom they pray; the things for which they pray are two : 1. That God would turn them; 2. That God would cause his anger toward them to cease. For the first; when they beseech God to turn them, they mean from the evils under which they lay, whether of sin or punishment, unto a comfortable state : for so largely



doth the use of the word extend; sometime there-with is begged conversion from sin, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. 'Turn thou me, and I shall be turned,'—'after that I was turned, I repented,' &c. Sometimes restitution to comfortable outward state, which is turning from punishment, as Ps. cxvii. 4, 'Turn again our captivity, O Lord.' And though here the latter is specially aimed at, yet we may not exclude the former, because, without turning from sin, the ceasing of God's wrath would not be expected, Ps. vii. 12, &c., 'If he turn not, he will whet his sword,' &c.

Mark then, God's people do beg of God the blessing of conversion from evils under which they lay, whether of sin or punishment, see Lam. v. 21, 'Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned: renew our days as of old.' Ps. lxxx. 3, 7, 20, 'Turn thou us again, O Lord God of hosts; cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.'

The reason is enfolded in the title which here they give to God—namely, that he is 'the God of their salvation,' both for soul and body. He restoreth the soul, Ps. xxiii. 3; the same word is there used, *ישׁוּב*. And he preserveth and delivereth the body and outward estate: Ps. xci. 15, 'I will be with him in trouble: I will deliver him.' Job v. 19, 'He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.' He is almighty, and so all-sufficient; nothing is too hard for him, Jer. xxxii. 27, and this power he puts forth for the good of his people.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, touching the author of true conversion to the soul. The practice of the church shews her judgment herein; she prays to God to be turned from evils, whether spiritual or corporal, and therefore no doubt acknowledged him to be the sole author thereof. It is true, in temporal evils, man by nature hath some ability to discern and endeavour the way and means of his deliverance. But in spiritual evils, of corruption and sin, it is not so; for therein man naturally is dead, and so wants ability of himself to conceive and act the things that belong to the life of grace, see Acts xxvi. 9. The wisdom and will of nature is to oppose the means of conversion; 'I verily thought with myself,' saith the apostle, 'that I ought to do many things con-

trary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.' For 'to be carnally-minded is death; because the carnal mind is enmity against God,' Rom. viii. 6, 7. Therefore heretof men do not become God's children, John i. 13; which will be plain, if we consider that the Scripture calls regeneration a new creation, 2 Cor. v. 17, and the first resurrection, Rev. xx. 6.

*Quest. 1.* Why then doth God bid men turn? as Ezek. xviii. 30, 'Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions.'

*Ans.* First, To shew us our duty, not our ability; what we ought, not what we are able of ourselves to do: for, John xv. 5, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' 'We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything, as of ourselves,' 2 Cor. iii. 5. 'No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him,' John vi. 44. Believers are born, 'not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,' chap. i. 13.

Secondly, God in these commandments hath an aim at the outward actions, wherein he desires reformation, whereto naturally man hath some power, as we may see by Ahab's humiliation, 1 Kings xxi. 27.

Thirdly, God requiring of us the grace of conversion, means we should endeavour ourselves in the outward means thereof,—to get ability thereto of God. Though grace be God's gift, yet is the use of means in our power.

*Quest. 2.* Are not such commands unjust or vain?

*Ans.* No, not unjust; because in Adam we were able to do anything God should require of us. And vain they are not, because they are means of conversion in God's elect, as to Lydia, Acts xvi. 14, 'Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.' Deut. xxxii. 46, 47, 'Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify amongst you; for it is not a vain thing for you.' 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.' And they leave the wicked without excuse, because they yield not such obedience as nature enables them unto, Luke x. 10, 11.

For admonition, this serves to move every one, under any evil or misery, corporal or spiritual, to become a follower of God's church, in beseeching God to give deliverance from it. This Christ teacheth in the Lord's Prayer, 'Deliver us from evil,' Mat. vi. 13. 'Is any man afflicted? let him pray,' James v. 13. Herein we must continue and watch. Col. iv. 2; yea, pray and not faint, Luke xviii. 1. Remember the many sharp repulses which Christ gave to the woman of Canaan, Mat. xv.: in the 23d verse he is silent; in the 24th he denies he was sent to such; in the 26th he likens her to a dog; but in the 28th there is this happy conclusion, 'O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.'

*Objct.* But natural men cannot pray.

*Ans.* Not so well as they ought, but let them do so well as they can, as did the Ninevites, Jonah iii. 8; and get others to pray for them, as Simon Magus did, Acts viii. 24; do as the sick of the palsy did, Mark ii. 3, who got four men to bear him, being not able of himself to come to Christ.

For comfort, this shews that God's church hath no evil to befall them from which they have not an all-sufficient deliverer, to whom they may go, as Dan. iii. 17. And this door cannot be shut up against them, as 2 Cor. iv. 8, 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed;' therefore remember and apply the precept, Phil. iv. 6, 'Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God.'

*And cease thine anger towards us to cease.* The second request of the church here made unto God for the ceasing of his anger,—that is, for the removal of his judgments, which they conceive to come from his anger, provoked by their sins.

This petition may be considered two ways. First, With reference to the confession made in the former verse; secondly, By itself.

In the former verse we have this confession, 'Thou hast taken away all thy wrath, and turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.' Yet here the church entreats that God would cause his anger toward them to cease. How do these things agree? Well enough, if we refer the confession to the time of their return out of Babylon, caused by Cyrus,

Ezra i.; Ps. cxxxvi. 1, 3; and this supplication to some time of troubles that befell them after their return, as under Cambyses, Artaxerxes, or Antiochus Epiphanes, in which times the adversaries did sore vex God's people. Now then in this reference see plainly,

That God's church and people, who have formerly felt his great favour and love, may afterward come to the sense and feeling of his bitter anger and displeasure. This thing is plain in this psalm, by comparing the first verse with the fifth and sixth; also in the 29th and 30th chapters of the book of Job; and in David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and many others, both for their own persons, and the people of God under their government. For David's person, see Ps. xxx. 6, 7, 'I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved. Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled;' and for the estate of God's people under him, Ps. lxxxix. 20, 28, compared with the 38th and 39th verses: in his time were war, famine, and pestilence. For Solomon, his peace, power, and plenty are at large set down, 1 Kings x. 27, &c.; his troubles, chap. xi. 11, &c. For Asa, his power and peace, see 2 Chron. xiv. 6; his great conquest over the Ethiopians, ver. 9; the joy of his people renewing covenant with God, chap. xv. 15; but chap. xvi. 8, 9, a great change. So for Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xvii. 3, the Lord was with him; and ver. 5, he had riches and honour in great abundance; yet, chap. xix. 2, wrath from the Lord was toward him; and, chap. xx., fearful war was made against him. So for Hezekiah, the Lord was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth, 2 Kings xviii. 7; and by restoring of religion he brought great joy to God's people at Jerusalem, 2 Chron. xxx. 26; and dealing uprightly, he prospered, chap. xxxi. 21; but, chap. xxxii., troubles come upon him by Sennacherib; and yet, upon God's deliverance, he was magnified in the sight of all nations, ver. 22, 23; but, ver. 24, he is sick unto death, from which being extraordinarily delivered, he was lifted up with pride, and so wrath was toward him, ver. 25.

The reason hereof is twofold. First, and most usually, Correction for sin, as we may see in the forenamed examples of David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah. So Ps. lxxxix. 31, 32, 'If

they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes.'

Secondly, God doth it sometimes for the trial of grace, as is plain in Job, by God's own confession, chap. ii. 3, 'Still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest me against him, to destroy him without cause.'

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, see here that the church of God here on earth is very fitly resembled to the moon, not only for receiving all the light of knowledge and comfort she hath from Christ, but even because of change and alteration in estate. As the moon is sometimes in the wane and eclipse, and sometimes in the full, so is God's church here on earth. Though outward prosperity, with the sense and feeling of God's favour, do most properly belong to God's church and people, yet they are not so entailed upon them infallibly, but that many times, instead of prosperity, they have great misery.

Christ is to his church, for joy and comfort, the Sun of righteousness; but yet sometimes the light of his countenance doth not appear for many days.

For admonition it serves two ways: first, In the days of peace and comfort to take heed of all sin, as being the true cause of eclipsing the light of God's favour: as we may see in general, Lam. iii. 39, 'Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?' ver. 42, 'We have transgressed and have rebelled: thou hast not pardoned.' If we would know the causes of God's anger, more particularly in those special sins that stir up his wrath, see before in the third verse, the use of admonition upon the first observation.

Secondly, When God's favour is any way eclipsed towards his church, or any member of it, hence learn to inquire into the true cause thereof, which ordinarily is some sin or sins; for the finding out whereof we must use God's law, as Joshua did the lot to find out Achan with the execrable thing, Joshua vii. 18, and the mariners did to find out Jonah, chap. i. 7.

This concerns every one for the true peace of his own soul, that hereby they may be brought to re-

pentance and reformation, and so shall God's favour be restored unto them.

For comfort this makes greatly to those that find and feel God's anger towards them, either in outward crosses or in inward terrors. Herein consider thy state is no worse than God's dearest children have been in, as Job, David, &c.; do therefore as they have done—repent of thy sins, pray for mercy, and wait by faith and patience, and peace shall come.

The petition, considered in itself, sets before us this practice of God's church and children; that when they lie under any evil or misery, they pray for the removal of God's anger towards them, see Ps. lxxix. 1, 'O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?' Ps. lxxix. 1, &c., 'O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps,' &c. Ps. lxxxix. 46, 'How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thyself, for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?' So did David, Ps. xxxviii. 1, &c., 'O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure,' &c.

The reason is, because they know that all affliction comes by divine dispensation, and ordinarily is the proper fruit of God's anger provoked by our sins, see Job v. 6, 'Affliction cometh not forth of the dust; neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.' It is a thing of God's sending; Isa. xlv. 7, 'I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.' Amos iii. 6, 'Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?' Mat. x. 29, 'A sparrow shall not fall on the ground without your Father.' The sword, the famine, the noisome beasts, and the pestilence, are God's four sore judgments, Ezek. xiv. 21.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction two ways: first, It lets us see the blindness of some, that in miseries never consider God's anger, but only look at second causes: hereof the prophet Isaiah doth complain, chap. xxvi. 11, 'Lord, when thy hand is lifted up they will not see.' This provokes to anger and desire of private revenge, which is a brutish part; the dog bites at the stone, without regard to him that threw it.

Secondly, See what a desperate course they take, that under miseries use unlawful means to help

themselves, as especially they do that go to wizards and witches; they increase the wrath of God against themselves, as Saul did by this course, 1 Chron. x. 13, 14; see Isa. viii. 19.

For admonition three ways: first, In every misery we must do as God's church here doth, lift up our thoughts to God's anger against us, provoked by our sins. For ordinarily misery is a fruit of God's anger against our iniquity; and therefore, if we desire the removal of the evil, we must take a course for the appeasing of God's anger; which is only to be done through Christ his Son, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for sin, Rom. iii. 5; 1 John ii. 2.

Secondly, As we desire to escape evils, we must beware of provoking the Lord to anger: 1 Cor. x. 22.

Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he? Jer. vii. 19, 'Do they provoke me to anger? saith the Lord; do they not provoke themselves, to the confusion of their own faces?'

Thirdly, That under every misery we follow the church in prayer to God for the appeasing of his anger. This will prevail, if it be joined with true humiliation, see 2 Chron. vi. 36, 37, compared with chap. vii. 13, 14; and consider how far Ahab prevailed, 1 Kings xxi. 27, 29.

Ver. 5, 6. *Will thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?*

These words contain the church's humble complaint unto God for two great evils: first, The long continuance of his anger toward them; secondly, The long delay of his favour from them.

The long continuance of his anger is twice pronounced, ver. 5, to express their deeper sense thereof, and their more earnest desire to have it removed. The delay of his favour is lamented in the sixth verse, and there amplified by the good effect of his renewing thereof—namely, their rejoicing in him.

In their double complaint of his anger continued note two things.

First, That God's anger may long continue towards his own children and people. This is the matter of their complaint in this place; and so, Ps. lxxix. 1, 'O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever?

why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?' ver. 10, 'O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blasphemous thy name for ever?' Ps. lxxvii. 7-9, 'Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?' Ps. lxxix. 5, 'How long, Lord? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?' Lam. v. 20, 22, 'Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, and forsake us so long time? Thou hast utterly rejected us: thou hast been very wroth against us.'

The reason hereof is twofold: first, The committing of sin and omitting of repentance, either in general, as Isa. ix. 13, 'The people turneth not unto him that smiteth them: neither do they seek the Lord of hosts;' ver. 14, 'Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day;' ver. 17, 'Every one is an hypocrite and an evil doer, and every mouth speaketh folly: for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still;' ver. 18, 'For wickedness burneth as the fire,' &c. When men grow obstinate in sin, God becomes resolute in punishment: see Jer. vi. 17-19, 'The watchmen say, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet: the people answer, We will not hearken. Therefore hear, ye nations: behold, I will bring evil upon this people;' ver. 21, 'Fathers and sons together shall fall,' &c.; chap. vii. 13, 15, 16, 19, 'I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not: and I called you, but you answered not. Therefore will I cast you out of my sight. Pray not thou for this people: for I will not hear thee. Do they provoke me to anger? saith the Lord: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces?' Or they repent not in sincerity, Isa. lviii. 2, 3, 6. Or repentance is not practised in particular by the sinners themselves, amongst God's people, though the godly there may repent and lament. See this plainly in the days of good king Josiah, who did greatly humble himself, 2 Kings xxii., and most worthily endeavour the reformation of religion, the rooting out of idolatry and impiety; as 2 Kings xxiii., where his rare goodness is commended from ver. 2 to 25, and yet, ver. 26, the Lord's anger still continued. And the reason we may see, Zeph. i. and iii.,

where is shewed that in his days continued much impiety; and the like we may see, Ezek. xiv. 13, 14. 'When the land sinneth against me, by trespassing grievously, &c. Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their own righteousness.'

The second reason is the continuing of scandal and reproach unto religion, amongst the wicked, by the grievous sins of God's children. Though they themselves may truly repent, yet their sins, causing the enemies of religion to blaspheme, may procure the continuance of God's anger, in temporal judgments: as in David's case, 2 Sam. xii. 10, &c.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, It lets us see what a fearful thing it is to live in impenitency, or to commit sins that are scandalous to religion, though we do repent; for both these ways we kindle God's anger; and who may stand when he is angry? for thereupon follows destruction; see Ps. ii. 12; Ps. lxxvi. 7.

Secondly, Here see who be the great hinderers of the welfare of any estate, church, commonwealth, or family—namely, the wicked, who commit sin with greediness, and draw iniquity as it were with cart-ropes; these are the persons that bring plague, famine, war, and other judgments. For affliction followeth sinners: where is lying, swearing, stealing, &c., there the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants, Hosea iv. 1, &c.; so Jer. xxiii. 10, 'Because of swearing the land mourneth,' &c.; and 1 Kings xviii. 18, 'Thou art he that troubles Israel.'

For admonition two ways: first, Take notice of the causes for which God's anger is kindled, and doth continue, that we may avoid them; and when we have fear or feeling of his anger, then make sure we look back towards our sins committed, and see what repentance we have shewed, and reformation; and ever beware of hypocrisy and of scandalous sins.

Secondly, To beware of rash judgment, either against ourselves or others, when God's anger doth long continue towards us or them. Indeed this state causeth the godly to think themselves forsaken of God; as Isa. xlix. 14, and to judge hardly of

others that be in that estate, as Job iv. 7, but both without good ground. Therefore we must do, as Micah vii. 8–10, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise,' &c.

For comfort to them that lie long under the heavy hand of God in any affliction, in soul, body, or outward estate, wherein they cannot but apprehend God's anger continued. They must consider that herein nothing doth befall them, but what hath lit on God's dear children; and therefore must neither murmur nor despair.

The second thing to be observed is the behaviour of God's people under the sense and feeling of God's long continued anger. They return to him that smote them, in humble complaint of his long continued anger toward them; see Ps. xlv. 9, 10, 17, 23, and lxxiv. 1, 2. So in Job, chap. vii. 7, 8, 12; in David, Ps. vi. 1, xxxviii. 1, and lxxxviii. 14; in Christ Jesus, in his agony, Mat. xxvi. 38, 39.

For, first, They know that affliction comes from God, Amos iii. 6; it comes not by chance, Job v. 6, but by divine providence and dispensation, Mat. x. 29, 30.

2. They know God sends them afflictions to make them seek unto him, Hosea v. 14, 15; Isa. xxvi. 6; as Absalom, by setting on fire Joab's corn-field, brought Joab to come to him, 2 Sam. xiv. 29, &c.

3. They know that, till God's anger be appeased, the strongest helps do fail, Job ix. 13.

4. That when they complain with godly sorrow, God is merciful, and will hear and help: Exod. xxii. 27, 'When he crieth unto me, I will hear, for I am gracious;' Ps. xxii. 24, 'He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard;' Ps. li. 17, 'A contrite and a broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise;' Ps. cii. 17, 'He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.'

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, That all God's people do conceive the true God to be not only a God of power, able to deliver, but a God of mercy and compassion, most willing to help and relieve those that be in misery, Joel ii. 13.

Secondly, See here the great impiety of those that, under the sense of God's anger in any affliction, seek other help than from God, as do seekers to witches and sorcerers, forbidden of God, Isa. viii. 19; and papists, that make intercession to saints for deliverance from sundry evils. They have fourteen helping saints, by whose intercession and merit men may be delivered from all adversity, as St George, St Blase, Erasmus, Panthaleon, Vitus, Christopher, Denis, &c.: (see Tilheman, Heshusius, in *erroribus pontificiarum*, loco 28, de cultu et invocatione sanctorum.) wherein they deal like to Ahaziah, that sent to Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, 2 Kings i. 1, &c.; and Isa. ix. 13, 'The people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts.'

For admonition, that we become followers of the saints and people of God, who in time of distress go to God and make their complaints to him: see Job's resolution in keeping close to God, Job xiii. 15, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.'

For comfort to the golly, they may go unto God for mercy and help when they feel God's anger towards them, as Ps. lxxvii. 1, &c.; Judges x. 10, 15. Here it is true, though fire be in the bush, the bush consumeth not. Hence, 2 Cor. iv. 8, 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed: we are perplexed, yet not in despair.'

Ver. 6. *Will thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?*

The second complaint of God's church and people for the long delay of his love and favour, which testified, by restoring them to comfortable state, they esteem and account as life itself, and therefore do complain of the want thereof as of the state of death: for the change whereof they have recourse to God, saying, *Will thou not revive us again?* moving him thereto by his good fruit and effect thereof, 'that thy people may rejoice in thee,' as if they should have said, While we remain in misery, under the sense of thy displeasure, we are as dead men, and therefore do complain to thee, who, by removing our misery, and renewing thy favour, canst revive us; whereupon will follow this good effect, that we thy people shall rejoice in thee, which will be for thy glory.

Here, then, we have to consider as well the

church's complaint, as her reason propounded to move God to give them relief from that misery whereof they complain.

In their complaint note two things: the first implied, That the sense of God's displeasure, in a state of misery, is to God's people as a state of death, Ps. xxxi. 9-11. David complains of his trouble and misery; and ver. 12, saith, 'I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel;' Ps. lxxxviii. 3-5, 'My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength. Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more, and they are cut off from thine hand.'

The reason hereof is the high esteem which God's people have of his favour, when once they have felt the joy and comfort of it in their souls: as Ps. xxx. 5, 'In his favour is life;' Ps. lxiii. 3, 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life.' For look, as the reasonable soul is a spirit of life from God, quickening the body and giving unto it sense and motion, Gen. ii. 7, so God's favour testified to the soul by the Spirit of grace, gives a lively cheerfulness to the heart of man, which makes him leap for joy: Ps. xxxii. 11, 'Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart;' yea, even in affliction, as Acts v. 41, they 'rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory,' 1 Pet. i. 8.

This serves for instruction and admonition.

For instruction two ways. First, It gives light to the better understanding of some places of Scripture, which, under the terms of life and resurrection, note out unto us the calling of the Jews, wherewithal God will vouchsafe unto them comfortable outward estate: as Isa. xxvi. 19, 'Thy dead men shall live,' &c. In assurance whereof, was shewed to Ezekiel the vision of the dry bones raised up to a great army, Ezek. xxxvii. 1, &c. there plainly shewed to belong to their restoring, by the union of the two sticks, to signify the union of Judah and Israel, ver. 16, &c. This is their resurrection from the dust of distress, Dan. xii. 1; for, 'what shall their restoring be,' saith St Paul, 'but life from the dead?' Rom. xi. 15.

Secondly, It lets us see a plain difference between God's children and natural men under affliction. The child of God lays more to heart God's displeasure towards him, testified by his affliction, than the affliction itself: as a toward child is more grieved that his loving father is offended with him, than for the smart of his correction. This David shewed in his flight from Absalom, when he bade Zadok the priest carry back the ark of God into the city: 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26, 'If,' saith he, 'I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.' Secondly, They more desire the feeling of God's favour, than the removal of the affliction, as Ps. li. 8; after Nathan had told David, 'The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die,' 2 Sam. xii. 13, yet he prays the Lord to make him to hear joy and gladness, and, ver. 12, to restore him to the joy of his salvation. Now natural men in these cases deal otherwise. First, They look more at the outward misery than at God's displeasure: as Isa. xxvi. 11, 'When thy hand is lifted up, they will not see;' Ps. x. 5, 'Thy judgments are far above out of his sight.' Secondly, They more desire the removal of God's judgments than the renewing of his favour; and therefore are said 'not to cry to the Lord with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds. They assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me,' Hosea vii. 14. If they respected God's favour above freedom from evils and fruition of blessings, they would not for these things use unlawful means, which increase God's displeasure, as Saul did, 2 Sam. xxviii. 7.

For admonition two ways: first, That in all afflictions we endeavour to approve ourselves to be God's people, by laying to heart God's displeasure for our sins above the smart of our affliction, and also desire the renewing of his favour above the removal of any outward evil, or the fruition of any temporal blessing.

Secondly, That we beware of those things which will eclipse his favour, and provoke his anger against us; for those are to the soul, as poison to the body. Oh that we could esteem sin in every action, as the children of the prophets did the wild vine in the

pottage, run away, and cry, 'Death is in the pot,' 2 Kings iv. 40. From the deadly plague and noisome pestilence we are careful to fly away betime, and far enough off; and so should we do from the unprofitable works of darkness, which are death to the soul.

Secondly, here observe, both in the phrase and matter therein expressed, That it seems strange to God's people that he suffers them to lie long in affliction, under the sense of his displeasure, Ps. xiii. 1, 2; four times is the length of God's delay complained of, and, Ps. lxxvii. 7, 8, by way of admiration, 'Will the Lord cast off for ever?' &c.

The reason is in a double knowledge which they have of God: first, In his essential properties of mercy and compassion; Ps. ciii. 8, 'The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.' Ps. lxxxvi. 15, 'Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.' Ps. cxlv. 9, 'His tender mercies are over all his works.'

Secondly, In his gracious and faithful promise made to his people when they enter into covenant with him, Ps. l. 5, 15, 'Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.' 'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' Luke xviii. 7, 8, 'Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.'

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, Their admiration doth presuppose their good and commendable information in the knowledge of God, for his gracious disposition towards his children, and the truth of his promises, assured in covenant with them, else they would never have thought it strange it should be otherwise with them. And therefore men should take heed how they lay claim to be God's people and yet be ignorant of his properties and promises. 1 Cor. xv. 34, 'Some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame.'

Secondly, Their admiration shews plainly that there is a justice and wisdom in God, even in the course of his providence over the state and ways of

men, which many times surpasseth the reach of God's children to discern and find out, till it please God of himself to reveal the reason and cause of his dealing, as Jer. xii. 1, 2, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?' &c. Who can but admire that the wicked Benjamites should twice prevail in fight against their brethren, that came for the execution of justice upon the sons of Belial, that had committed villany with the Levite's concubine? Judges xx. 18, &c.

For admonition, it serves very fitly to move us to godly behaviour under long affliction, that we carefully suppress in ourselves all thoughts of hard or unjust dealing in God towards us, therein bringing our hearts to this resolution, with Jeremiah, that God is righteous, even then, when his dealing seems most strange unto us.

*Quest.* How shall we be able so to do?

*Ans.* By evincing our hearts of four things in God: justice, sovereignty, wisdom, and power. First, Of *justice*; to do right to all, and wrong to none. This is so essential in God, that he may as soon cease to be God, as not to do right, Gen. xviii. 25; Ps. cxlv. 17; Jer. xii. 1; Job xxxiv. 10, 23. And therefore the godly under affliction must not be worse than Pharaoh, who confesseth, Exod. ix. 27, 'I have sinned; the Lord is righteous, I and my people are wicked.' Secondly, We must lay to heart God's *sovereignty*, whereby he may do with his own what he will; he may exercise his under the cross, not only for correction for sin, but also for trial of grace, as he did Job, chap. ii. 3. We grant this liberty to men over their goods and cattle, which are the gifts of God's providence unto them, and shall we deny it to the Lord over man, who hath absolute sovereignty over him, both by creation and providence?

Thirdly, We must bethink ourselves of God's *wisdom*, which indeed is infinite, Ps. cxlvii. 5; and therefore may in himself perfectly discern that that affliction which he continues upon his children is most for his own glory, and best for their good, though they conceive the contrary, as children do under the rod in the hand of their parents. Lastly, Consider his almighty *power*; he can bring light out of darkness, 2 Cor. iv. 6, and so he useth to do

to his children, Ps. cxii. 4; so as they shall confess it is good for them that they have been afflicted, Ps. cxix. 71. And indeed, whosoever considereth the end which God brought unto Job, to David, and the rest, whom he exercised under great affliction, will confess no less. These things, well considered, will make us know our duty, and acknowledge that repining against God's correction continued is ever a fruit of corruption which reigneth in natural men, and maketh them to blaspheme under God's judgments, Rev. xvi. 9.

For comfort, it makes greatly to God's children under long affliction to consider that such an estate may continue upon his own children and servants, by the rule of his justice, sovereignty, wisdom, and power; and therefore they need not to murmur or despair, when nothing befalls them but that which hath befallen their betters in grace, as Job, David, &c.

*That thy people may rejoice in thee.* The reason propounded by God's church to move the Lord to hasten their deliverance out of misery, and the removal of their afflictions,—namely, because thereupon they should be justly occasioned to rejoice in God, as plainly discerning this to be a fruit of his mercy and loving providence over them.

Here then note, that when God's people are delivered from affliction they rejoice in God, as well by receiving it as from God's hand; as Ps. cxxvi. 3, 'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad;' as by giving all the honour and praise thereof to God alone, as Moses and Aaron did for their deliverance at the Red Sea, Exod. xv. 1, &c.; and as Deborah and Barak did, Judges v. 1, &c.; David also, Ps. cxviii. 1, &c.; and Jehoshaphat and the people, 2 Chron. xx. 26, 27.

The reason hereof is, that though means be used by God's people, yet they know that the blessing is not in the means, but in the Lord, who doth prosper the same: Ps. xlii. 6-8, 'For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us. In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever.'

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, it shews us a plain difference between God's children and natural men in the fruition of temporal blessings, and so gives evidence



of nature and grace in the days of peace; for mere nature looks at outward means and at second causes; and so men either glory in themselves, as Dan. iv. 30, or sacrifice to their nets, as Hab. i. 15, 16. But the godly, though they use means, yet they first look at God, and give the chief praise to him, and look to the means in the second place, as 1 Sam. xxv. 32.

For admonition, it serves effectually to move every child of God to conform himself to this profession and practice of the godly; even for every blessing, whether of deliverance from evil or fruition of good, to rejoice in the Lord. This was David's ordinary practice, Ps. xxxiv. 1, 2, 4. This also we shall do, if we be careful of three things: first, To see God's hand of mercy in everything wherein we rejoice; as Ps. cxviii. 15, 16, 23, 24, 'The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous; the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly,' &c. Secondly, To give him praise and thanks for every blessing: thus God is honoured, Ps. l. 23; therefore David stirreth up his soul hereunto, Ps. ciii. 1, 2, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' The very blind heathen have done this for the honour of their idols, as Judges xvi. 23; Dan. v. 4. Shall not God's people much more do it to the true God?

Thirdly, To use the blessings wherein we rejoice to God's glory, stirring up ourselves thereby to walk more obediently to God's commandments: Ps. cxvi. 8, 9, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling: I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.'

Ver. 7. *Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.*

Here the church doth return again unto humble petition or supplication, and that for two things: first, That the Lord would shew them his mercy; secondly, Give them his salvation.

For the first: when they say, 'Shew us thy mercy, O Lord,' they do plainly imply that his mercy or loving-kindness was hid from them; and yet for all that, they do not leave the Lord in that estate, but humbly beg the sight and evidence of his mercy.

So that in this first petition we have to note two things—the miserable state of God's church for a time, and the godly behaviour of the church in that estate.

For the first; the miserable estate of God's church is this—for a time they are without the sense and feeling of God's mercy and kindness, else they would not desire to see it: Ps. lxxiv. 1, 9, 'O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? We see not our signs'—to wit, of thy mercy towards our help. Ps. lxxvii. 8, 9, 'Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Hath God forgotten to be gracious?' Ps. lxxxix. 49, 'Lord, where are thy former loving-kindnesses?'

The reason hereof is, first, Trial of grace, as in Job: chap. xiii. 24, 'Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy.' Ver. 26, 'Thou writest bitter things against me.'

Secondly, Correction for sins, which stir up God's anger against his people, and so hide his mercy and kindness from them. Lam. iii. 42-44, 'We have transgressed and have rebelled: thou hast not pardoned. Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us: thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied. Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through.' This is acknowledged in Solomon's prayer: 2 Chron. vi. 36, 'If they sin against thee, for there is no man which sinneth not, and thou be angry with them,' &c. Ps. cvi. 39, 40, 'Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a-whoring with their own inventions. Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.'

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction two ways: first, Touching the true God. This state of the church, wanting the sense of God's mercy, teacheth us to conceive and know, that though God be to his church a God of mercy in Christ, and so delight therein, that his mercy is said to be above all his works, Ps. cxlv. 9, and that he would be known to delight therein, Jer. ix. 23, yet withal that he is a God of severity and justice, not sparing his own people when they sin against them. Thus he describes himself, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, Though he 'keep his mercy for thousands,' yet he will 'by no means clear the guilty.' How did he punish his own people the Jews! See

Lam. i. 12, and his own dearest servants for sin! David, 2 Sam. xii. 10, &c.; Asa, and others; nay his own Son, when he bore our sins. Which, well considered, will be the ground of God's fear in our hearts, Exod. xxiii. 20, 21, 'I will send mine angel, which shall keep thee in the way, &c. Beware of him, obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him.' 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.' Jer. v. 22, 'Fear ye not me? saith the Lord; will ye not tremble at his presence?' Jer. x. 7, 'Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for unto thee doth it appertain.'

Secondly, Touching God's people, see here, that they may truly belong to God by covenant in Christ, and yet for a time be without the sense and feeling of his mercy and kindness, as Ps. lxxiv. 1, 19, 'O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? Forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.' Ps. lxxxviii. 8, 9, 'Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?'

*Object.* Here, then, is the truth of his promise, Isa. liv. 10, 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee,' &c. Whereupon, Ps. xxiii. 6, 'Mercy and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life;' for, Ps. lxxxix. 28, 'My mercy will I keep for him for ever.' Ps. cxxxvi. twenty-six times, in every verse once, 'For his mercy endureth for ever.'

*Ans.* We must put a difference between God's mercy, and kindness conceived in himself and vouchsafed to his children and people, and the expressing and manifestation thereof. The former, once begun, is ever continued towards those that be in Christ: John xiii. 1, 'Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end;' Rom. xi. 29, 'For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance;' but the manifestation thereof is many times restrained for good causes, as either trial of grace, or correction for sin, which liberty we give to natural parents towards their children, and therefore must take heed we deny it not to God.

For admonition two ways. First, That we take heed of all those things that cause the Lord to hide his favour from us, which indeed is all sin, and only sin, that separates, Isa. lix. 2,—even pride and haughtiness upon the fruition of his favour; as Ps. xxx. 6, 7, 'In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.'

Secondly, Not to be dismayed, or to despair under the sense of God's displeasure; for it is the state of the godly sometimes to feel it. We must say with the church, 'I will bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against him,' Micah vii. 9; we must humble ourselves, and wait for mercy, as Ps. xlii. 11, and then know that his favour shall be renewed: 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.' We must learn to 'walk by faith, and not by sight,' 2 Cor. v. 7; to live by faith, and not by sight, Hab. ii. 4; for, Ps. lxxxix. 30, &c., 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail,' &c.

The second thing here to be noted is, the behaviour of God's people in this their miserable estate, here plainly expressed. When they want the sense and feeling of God's mercy and kindness, they leave not God, but go to him by humble and earnest prayer for some evidence thereof: Ps. lxxxvii. 2, 'In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;' Ps. xl. 11, 12, 'Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me. For innumerable evils have compassed me about,' &c.; Ps. xlii. 7-9, 'All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me?' &c.; Ps. xlv. 17, 24, 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee. Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction?'

The reason of this their behaviour is, partly in their knowledge, but principally in their faith in

God. For their knowledge, by God's word they are certainly assured that mercy is essential in God: Ps. lxxii. 12, 'Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy;' 'He is plenteous in mercy,' Ps. ciii. 8; 'His mercy is great above the heavens,' Ps. cviii. 4; 'The earth is full of his goodness,' Ps. xxxiii. 5; 'His tender mercies are over all his works,' Ps. cxlv. 9. Also they know he takes pleasure in those that hope in his mercy, Ps. cxlvii. 11. Now, will they that know this do less to God, than Benhadad's servants did to the king of Israel? 1 Kings xx. 31, 32, 'We have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings,' &c.

Secondly, They trust in God, and therefore have recourse unto him in misery, and under the sense of his anger. Ps. xlii. 3, 5, 'Consider and hear. I have trusted in thy mercy.' Ps. xxii. 1, 4, 5, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.'

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, it lets us see a difference both in judgment and practice between the godly and the wicked. For judgment; even about prayer in affliction, the wicked think it unprofitable to pray, Job xxi. 15; Mal. iii. 14; but the godly know it is otherwise, James v. 16. For practice; the wicked call not upon God, but only for show, Ps. xiv. 4; Hosea vii. 14. But the godly are much in this duty: Ps. v. 3, 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning,' &c.; Ps. lv. 17, 'Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray; and cry aloud;' Ps. exix. 164, 'Seven times a day do I praise thee.' Yea, herein they offer a holy violence unto God, as Jacob held the angel, and would not let him go till he blessed him, Gen. xxxii. 24, 26; and Moses, as it were, held God from destroying the Israelites when they had made the golden calf, Exod. xxxii. 10, &c.

For admonition, that we endeavour to approve ourselves to be God's people, and true members of his church, by following them in this godly practice, even then to press upon the Lord by our humble and earnest prayers, when he seemeth to oppress us with his judgments; when he hides his mercy from

us we must by our prayers sue and seek to find mercy with him, as David did, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.

*Quest.* How shall we be enabled hereunto?

*Ans.* By doing two things: first, We must inform our hearts rightly in the nature of God for mercy and compassion, as is shewed in the first reason, and in the gracious promises made to his people even when they are in misery. Secondly, Fit ourselves to have good title to the same, which requires two things at our hands: 1. True and unfeigned repentance, whereby our sins be removed, and so a way made to his mercy, Jer. xviii. 7, 8; 2. The getting and exercising of those graces of the Spirit, which testify we stand rightly in covenant with God: as, 1. Faith in God through Christ; rely upon him for the pardon of sin and saving of our souls, and we shall not distrust for lesser deliverances: as Ps. lvi. 13, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling?' 2. Fear God in heart, and shew it by eschewing evil and doing good in life: Ps. xxv. 12, 14, 'What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant;' Ps. ciii. 11, 'For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.' 3. Exercise mercy towards our brethren, so shall we find the Lord merciful unto us; Ps. xviii. 25, 'With the merciful thou shalt shew thyself merciful.' For on the contrary, James ii. 13, 'He shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy;' and Ps. cix. 12, 16, 'Let there be none to extend mercy unto him, &c. Because that he remembered not to shew mercy,' &c. 4. Be much in prayer to God in the name of Christ for whatsoever we lack, Phil. iv. 6. See encouragements, Ps. l. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me;' and Ps. lxxxvi. 5, 'Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.'

*And grant us thy salvation.*

The second benefit which God's church and people here beg of God as a fruit and evidence of his mercy and kindness, namely, to give them his salvation—that is, deliverance from the troubles of their enemies, and from all other evils that lay upon them; for

that is the salvation here meant, as Exod. xiv. 13, 'Stand still and behold the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you.'

In this petition note two things: 1. The place and order in which this blessing is sought; 2. What kind of salvation they desire, namely, that which comes from God,—Grant us *thy* salvation.'

For the first, note, God's people seek God's salvation after they have sought his mercy; first they beg mercy at his hands, and then deliverance from evils: Ps. xl. 11, 'Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.' Ps. vi. 2, 'Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed.' First mercy, then healing: Ps. xxx. 10, 'Have mercy upon me, O Lord, be thou my helper.'

The reason hereof is twofold: first, Their partaking of God's mercy was necessary for the removal of the cause of their misery, which ordinarily is sin; that brings death, and all evils that be forerunners thereof, Rom. v. 12. Now there is no way to have sin removed but through God's mercy in Christ, as David shews, Ps. li. 1, 2, 14.

Secondly, Mercy and kindness in God is properly the moving cause of his saving us, both temporarily in this world, and eternally in the world to come. For preservation, which is temporal salvation, see Ps. vi. 4, David, being sick and weak, prays thus: 'O save me for thy mercies' sake;' and so, when he was in danger of his life by enemies, he makes the same prayer, 'O save me for thy mercies' sake,' Ps. xxxi. 16; Ps. xlv. 3, 'Their own arm did not save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.' This the people say of God's dealing with their forefathers, bringing them out of Egypt into Canaan; and thereupon being in misery, they fly to the same ground of help: ver. 26, 'Arise for our help, redeem us for thy mercies' sake.' So David, as a type of Christ in his passion, prays: 'Help me, O Lord my God: O save me, according to thy mercy.' And for salvation eternal, it is wholly founded on God's mercy in Christ; Tit. iii. 5, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us,' &c. Ps. cxli. 4, 'Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.'

This serves for instruction, for admonition, and for comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, They that have no good title to God's mercy can have no good assurance of God's salvation, either temporal or eternal; a point very considerable of wicked men, that hate instruction, as Ps. l. 17, and encourage themselves in a wicked course, as Deut. xxix. 19, 20, blessing themselves in their hearts, saying, We shall have peace, &c. Such the Lord will not spare, see Prov. i. 25, 26. Hereupon, Ps. cxix. 155, 'Salvation is far from the wicked.' It is true, wicked men flatter themselves in their own eyes with this, Oh, God is merciful; but whoso is wise will consider whose word shall stand, God's or theirs, as Jer. xlv. 28.

Secondly, See here the true church, seeking God's salvation, pleads mercy, not merit; and so did Paul profess and teach, 1 Cor. iv. 4; Phil. iii. 9; Tit. iii. 5; so Ps. cxv. 1; Isa. lxiv. 6.

For admonition two ways: first, To all that look for God's salvation, temporal or eternal, to make sure they stand rightly entitled to God's favour and mercy, for salvation follows mercy. Now God's mercy is only had in and through faith in Christ Jesus, 'whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood,' &c., Rom. iii. 25.

Secondly, In the use of lawful means for preservation to renew our title to God's mercy. The want hereof hinders many times the fruition of God's blessing: as in Asa, 2 Chron. xvi. 12, 'In his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians,' and so died. But the practice of it by Hezekiah prevented the reversing of the sentence of death, Isa. xxxviii. 2, &c.

For comfort, to those that are truly entitled to mercy, and yet lie under affliction, they may assure themselves of a better deliverance, as Heb. xi. 35; God's mercy shall be magnified in them, 'whether by life or death,' Phil. i. 20. If deliverance be good, they shall have it; if they want deliverance, their affliction shall be sanctified unto them.

The second thing to be noted in this last petition is, What kind of salvation or deliverance the people of God do desire when they are in misery; namely, that which comes from God. God's people in misery desire the deliverance which is of God's sending: Ps. lx. 11, 'Give us help from trouble: for vain is

the help of man.' Ps. xx. 7, 'Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.' Ver. 9, 'Save, Lord.' Ps. cvi. 47, 'Save us, O Lord our God.'

First, They know that salvation belongs unto him, Ps. iii. 8. 'He is the God of salvation,' Ps. lxxviii. 20. 'With him is plenteous redemption,' Ps. cxxxv. 7.

Secondly, They know that without him the strongest helps do fail: as Job ix. 13, 'If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him;' and Isa. xxx. 1, &c., 'Woe to the rebellious children, &c. They were all ashamed of a people that could not profit them, nor be an help,' &c.

Thirdly, They know that deliverance is easy unto him when distress and danger is most grievous, Jer. xxxii. 27; there is nothing too hard for him. He can save with many or with few, 1 Sam. xiv. 6; with weak means, Judges vii. 20; without means, Isa. lxiii. 5; by his bare command, Ps. xlv. 4, as Mat. viii. 3, 'I will; be thou clean.' Yea, by destroying means, as Israel through the Red Sea, Exod. xiv. 26, &c.; and the three servants of God in the fire, Dan. iii. 25, 27.

Fourthly, They know that God stands bound by promise, in the covenant which he makes with his people, to deliver them out of misery and distress when they humble themselves and pray: see Ps. l. 5, 15; 2 Chron. vii. 14.

This serves to discover their impiety, which use unlawful means to help themselves from under miseries and afflictions, as the help and direction of witches and wizards: like to Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. 7; and to Ahaziah, 2 Kings 1-3; forbidden, Lev. xx. 6; Isa. viii. 19; also theft, oppression, bribery, perjury, lying, &c.

This is not the practice of God's people. Help and deliverance by such means as these is not of God, but of the devil; and such persons should think of Christ's speech to the Jews: John viii. 44, 'You are of your father the devil, for the lusts of your father you will do.'

Secondly, To admonish us in all miseries to imitate God's people in seeking only that help and deliverance which comes from God. Consider herein the practice of the golly, that would not receive de-

liverance by unlawful means, Heb. xi. 35, alluding to 2 Mac. vi. 23, 30.

Ver. 8. *I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace to his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.*

In this verse, and those which follow to the end of the psalm, is contained the third and last part thereof, shewing the church's godly behaviour after she had made her complaint and prayer, in promising to wait upon God for a gracious answer; whereof she lays down sufficient ground, first in general in this verse, then more particularly in the rest of the psalm.

Her behaviour is in these words, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak,' meaning by way of answer to my complaint and prayer. Wherein we have to note two things: 1. How she styleth God in this place; 2. What duty she undertaketh towards him.

For the first, The titles here given to God by the church are two, יהוה יהוה, God, the Lord. The first notes out his power, the second his performance of what he hath promised: as Exod. vi. 3, 'I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them.' Ver. 6, 'Wherefore say unto them, I am the Lord; I will bring you out.'

And this is used by the church and godly elsewhere: as Ps. cxviii. 27, 'God is the Lord, who hath given us light.'

The reason of this practice of the church is to strengthen herself to the better performance of the duty she undertakes, which is to wait for God's answer to her prayers; whereto she shall be the better encouraged and enabled by considering that God is Jehovah, one that not only hath being of himself, but gives being to his promises. Now, being God, he is able, and being Jehovah, he is faithful: as Heb. x. 23, 'He is faithful that promised;' 1 Thes. v. 24, 'He will also do it.' And for his promise, see Ps. l. 15.

This should teach us to labour to understand the holy titles whereby God is styled in Scripture, that so we may the better make a right use of them, both to terrify us from sin, and to encourage us in faith and obedience. As for terror, to consider that he is

called an everlasting burning and devouring fire, Isa. xxxiii. 14. For encouragement in difficult cases, to consider that he is the maker of heaven and earth, 'great in counsel, mighty in work,' Jer. xxxii. 17, 19. For mercy, 'The good God,' 2 Chron. xxx. 18; for encouragement in prayer, 'Our Father, which art in heaven,' Mat. vi. 9, which lays a ground both of confidence, in that he is our Father, and of fear and humility, in that he is in heaven.

Secondly, Is God the Lord? Then those that call him so must fear him in regard of his power, Jer. v. 25; Mat. x. 28, obey him as their Lord, Luke vi. 46, and rest upon him by faith; because he makes good his gracious promises, 2 Cor. i. 20.

The duty which the church here undertakes to perform to God is this—she will patiently attend for God's gracious answer to her complaint and prayer. So doth Job, chap. xiv., 'All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come;' Ps. xl. 1, 'I waited patiently for the Lord;' Ps. cxxx. 5, 6, 'I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait.'

The reason hereof is from the work of God's Spirit in his children, enabling them by faith, 1. To reverence his command, enjoining them so to do: Ps. xxvii. 14. 'Wait on the Lord, be of good courage.' 2. To rely upon his promise to hear and help, 2 Chron. vii. 14, wherein they know he will not fail; because he is a God of power, able to do whatsoever he will, Ps. cxv. 3, and of mercy, exceeding abundant, above all that we can ask or think, Eph. iii. 20.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, it acquaints us with a plain difference between the godly, who are believers, and the wicked, who are unbelievers. The godly do not only pray to God, but wait also for an answer when they have made their prayer, as Ps. xlii. 5, 11; Isa. xxviii. 16. But the wicked either pray not, as Ps. xiv. 4, or if they do pray, yet they will not wait: as 2 Kings vi. 33, 'What should I wait upon the Lord any longer?' They deal with their prayers as the ostrich doth with her eggs, which she leaveth in the earth, &c., Job xxxix. 14, &c., because God hath deprived them of understanding, as punishment of their contempt of the means of grace, else they would not account the exercise of prayer unprofitable, as Job xxi. 15; Mal. iii. 14.

For admonition, that we endeavour to approve

ourselves to be God's people by waiting upon God for a gracious answer to our prayers. This we should do every day, according to the practice of the church in this place, whereunto, if we did indeed set ourselves, we would make conscience of all sin, that we might keep ourselves in the love of God, without which we cannot comfortably expect a gracious answer from him to our prayers. Now, to enable us to wait and listen for a gracious answer when we have prayed, we must be well exercised in godly consideration and practice.

The consideration needful hereto is threefold: first, Of God's promise made to those that pray unto him; for it is presumption to wait for that which God hath not promised to give. True expectation is a fruit of faith, which ever looks at God's word of promise. Secondly, Of God's power and mercy; for as his power will assure us that he is able, so his mercy will shew that he is most ready and willing to grant our requests. Thirdly, We must consider his manner of answer. It is threefold: sometime by giving that particular blessing we ask, as 1 Sam. i. 27, 'For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him;' sometime by giving some other thing answerable to the blessing, as 2 Cor. xii. 9, 'My grace is sufficient for thee;' and sometimes by giving patience and strength to bear the evils which we would have removed, as Heb. v. 7.

The godly practice hereto needful is threefold: first, To stir up our hearts to lay hold on God's promises by faith, as Ps. xliii. v. And herein we must shew godly judgment in labouring to trust perfectly for spiritual blessings simply needful to salvation: as 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed,' &c. But for spiritual blessings less necessary, as also for all temporal blessings, to submit our wills to God's will. Secondly, We must hold on in the way of obedience: Ps. xxxvii. 34, 'Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land.' Thirdly, Continue in prayer, Col. iv. 2; 'Keep not silence, give the Lord no rest,' Isa. lxii. 6, 7.

*For he will speak peace to his people and to his saints.*

The reason or ground whereby the church doth encourage herself to the former godly practice, drawn

from God's gracious dealing with his people in giving comfortable answer to their prayers, for peace in Scripture doth oftentimes note out all manner of welfare, as Exod. xviii. 7; Ps. cxxii. 6, and xxxv. 27.

In this reason we have two things to note: first, The honourable title whereby God's people here be styled, namely, that they are his saints; secondly, The special favour which God will shew unto them in answer to their prayers; he will speak peace unto them.

For the first, They are his saints, even gracious saints, such as he doth prosecute with special grace and favour, as we speak, the Lord's favourites: Ps. xxx. 4, 'Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his;' Ps. xxxi. 23, 'O love the Lord, ye his saints, for the Lord preserveth the faithful;' Ps. xxxvii. 28, 'He forsaketh not his saints.'

The reason and ground of this happy and honourable estate is in God alone: 1 Cor. iv. 7. 'For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?' First, In God the Father electing and choosing them to be holy: 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.' Secondly, In God the Son redeeming them from sin, washing and cleansing them with the washing of water by the word, that he might present them to himself without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that they might be holy and without blemish, Eph. v. 25-27. Thirdly, In the work of the Holy Ghost applying the merit and power of Christ's death unto them, for the abolishing of corruption and the renewing of the graces of his holy image: 1 Pet. i. 22, 'Ye have purified yourselves in obeying the truth through the Spirit.' Fourthly, In a work of all three persons vouchsafing unto them an effectual calling: 1 Cor. i. 2, 'Called to be saints.'

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, first, It lets us plainly see that God hath his saints in this world, such as from election, through redemption and sanctification, are holy and pure in his sight: Num. xxiii. 21, 'He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob.' It is not as

papists say, that there are none but in heaven, for here they have their beginning, and now are truly, though not perfectly holy.

Secondly, Here see how far the profane do deceive themselves when they lay claim to be God's people: Ps. xciv. 20, 'Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?' 2 Cor. vi. 14, &c., 'What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness,' &c.; 1 John i. 6, 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.'

For admonition, first, That if we lay claim to be God's people, we labour after holiness: Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord,' and see how far forth, 'in all manner of conversation,' 1 Pet. i. 15. For this cause we must exercise ourselves in the word and prayer, the Lord's ordinances sanctified to his elect, for the beginning of holiness and increase thereof in their souls.

Secondly, That we learn to delight in the godly: Ps. xvi. 2, 3, 'My goodness extendeth not unto thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' Ps. cxix. 63, 'I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts;' as the Lord doth. Ps. cxlvii. 11, 'The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.'

For comfort, it makes greatly against the contempt of the world: 1 Sam. ii. 9, 'He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness;' Deut. xxxiii. 2, 3; Cant. ii. 14; Ps. cxlix. 9.

For the second, God will speak peace to his people; he will give a comfortable and gracious answer to their complaints and prayers: Ps. xxix. 11, 'The Lord will bless his people with peace.' Ps. xii. 5, 'For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, I will up, saith the Lord, and set him at liberty.' Ps. l. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee.' Isa. xxvi. 12, 'Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us.' Chap. xl. 1, 2, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God: speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.' Thus he answered Daniel's prayer, chap. ix. 20, 21, 23.

The reason hereof is twofold: first, His covenant

of grace, made with his people in Christ, through whom it becomes the covenant of peace, Isa. liv. 10; 'For Christ is the Prince of Peace,' Isa. ix. 6; yea, 'our peace,' Eph. ii. 14; 'In whom we have peace,' John xvi. 33.

Secondly, Because his saints be indued with those graces and virtues which give them title to true peace: as faith in God, Rom. v. 1; and love to God's law, Ps. cxix. 165; and obedience to his commandments, Isa. xlviii. 18.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, It shews the sweet fruit and benefit of true piety in the profession of God's holy religion. It is not, as wicked men think, a vain thing to serve God, Job xxi. 15; Mal. iii. 14; but undoubtedly there is fruit for the righteous, Ps. lviii. 11. 'Godliness is great gain,' 1 Tim. vi. 6; 'It is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,' chap. iv. 8. This will more plainly appear if we consider the extent of this peace which God promiseth to his people. It is not only, 1. The peace of God,—that is, God's favour and love,—which passeth all understanding, Eph. iii. 19, which Christ giveth to those that be godly, John xiv. 27; but, 2. Peace of conscience, Rom. v. 1, which is a continual feast, Prov. xv. 15, and gives boldness with God in prayer, 1 John iii. 21; and, 3. Peace with the good angels in heaven, Ps. xxxiv. 7, and ix. 10; Heb. i. 14. 4. Peace with God's church, Acts iv. 32; yea, 5. Peace with all earthly creatures for their comfortable use and service, Job v. 23; Hosea ii. 18; even, 6. With wicked men, as Joseph had in Potiphar's house and Pharaoh's court, Gen. xxxix. 2, &c., and xli. 37, &c.; and Daniel in the kings' courts of Babel and Persia, chaps. ii., v., and vi.; and, 7. With hurtful creatures, when it makes for God's glory in the good of his church, as we may see by the three children in the fire, Dan. iii.; by Daniel in the lions' den, chap. vi.; by Jonah in the whale's belly, chap. ii.; and by Paul among the barbarians, when he shook off the viper, Acts xxviii. 2, &c. And are not all these great blessings and privileges?

Secondly, This teacheth magistrates and ministers how they ought to carry themselves in their places,

for they are both in the place of God, sent and set in by him, as Rom. xiii. 1, 4; 2 Cor. v. 20; and magistrates bear the name of God, Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6; John x. 34, 35. Therefore they must be followers of God, speak peace to the godly, deal kindly with those that walk uprightly. Magistrates must look at God; Job viii. 20, 'He forsaketh not the upright, nor taketh the wicked by the hand; either to shew kindness, or to yield support.' And ministers, as ambassadors, must deliver the will of their King and Master, and as stewards, must give to every one his due portion, Luke xii. 42, which, if it were done, would encourage the good and damnt the wicked. But, alas! the contrary practice of both mars all in all estates. Magistrates stretch out the hand to scornors and drunkards, Hosea vii. 5, and beat the good, Ezek. xxxiv. 3, &c.; and ministers, some by ill teaching, but more by bad living, do strengthen the hands of the wicked, Jer. xxiii. 14, and make sad the hearts of those whom God hath not made sad.

For admonition, it serves effectually to all that are desirous God should speak peace unto them, to be careful to become truly his saints and people, for to them God will speak peace, and to none else indeed; as Isa. xlviii. 22, 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.' Now, they that would approve themselves to be God's people and saints, must do three things.

First, By true repentance, break off the course of their sins, and turn from every evil way; for else God will not own them for his people, Ps. l. 16, 17. They that live in sin, walk in darkness, and so cannot have fellowship with him, 1 John i. 6; 2 Cor. vi. 14.

Secondly, By true faith in Christ, rest and rely upon God's mercy for pardon of sin and salvation; for he that cometh unto God, and hath fellowship with him, must believe, Heb. xi. 6. Therefore Christ bidding his disciples to believe on him as they believe on God, John xiv. 1, doth encourage them thereto by this, that he is the way, the truth, and the life, by whom alone they must have access to the Father, ver. 6; 'In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him,' Eph. iii. 12.

Thirdly, Walk in new obedience, to testify the truth of their repentance and faith; for faith



worketh by love, Gal. v. 6. 'And this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments,' 1 John v. 3.

For comfort, it maketh greatly to God's people and children in any misery or trouble that doth befall them; for God will speak peace unto them: peace shall come, Isa. lvii. 2. Though for a time they be in heaviness through manifold temptations, yet believing in Christ, they rejoice with joy unspeakable, 1 Peter i. 6, 8. 'God will give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning,' &c., Isa. lxi. 3. 'Only they must wait in the way of obedience,' Ps. xlii. 5, 11. Isa. xl. 31, 'They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.'

*But let them not turn again to folly.* A needful caveat or item for God's people touching their behaviour, whereby they wait for peace from God, they must not turn again to folly. By folly he meaneth their sins, which formerly had brought misery upon them; thereto he would not have them turn again.

In this caveat there are two things to be observed: first, The title given to sin; secondly, The behaviour required of God's people toward it.

For the first, Sin is here called folly or foolishness by the Holy Ghost; so also, Prov. xxii. 15, 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child,—that is, corruption sticks fast to the heart and soul by nature even in childhood. Ps. xxxviii. 5, 'My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness,'—that is, because of my sinfulness. Ps. cvii. 17, 'Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.' Prov. xxvi. 11, 'As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly,'—that is, a wicked man returneth to his sin.

In reason this is plain: for, first, In every sin there is a rejecting of the word of God, which is divine wisdom, Jer. viii. 9; nay, a forsaking God himself, and cleaving to the devil, which is extreme madness.

Secondly, Every sin gives a deadly wound to the soul, being indeed the sting of death, 1 Cor. xv. 56. See Rom. v. 12, and vi. 23. Now, who but fools or madmen will hurt themselves? Every man that is wise, will be wise for himself, Prov. ix. 12.

Thirdly, Every sin must be undone by repentance,

or else the doing of it will destroy the sinner: Ps. vii. 12, 13, 'If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death.' 'The wicked shall be turned into hell,' Ps. ix. 17.

This shews, first, That the world is full of fools; for sin abounds everywhere; the whole world lieth in wickedness, 1 John v. 19. Which well considered may stay our hearts from doubting of God's providence, because of the general disorders that be in the world; see Ps. lxxv. 3, 4, 'The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I said unto the foolish, deal not so foolishly,' &c.

Secondly, As we desire to escape the brand of folly, so we must be careful to shun the practice of sin and impiety; for sin is folly, and they that commit it deal foolishly, as 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. The rather because of the devil's dealing with these fools, they are in his hands, and he deals with them, as many times great men in the world do with naturals, make a prey of their estate, and sport themselves with their folly; so the devil makes a prey of their souls, and sports himself with their sins, which be their folly. Even as the Philistines deal with Samson, Judges xvi. 15; who turned him to grind in their prison-house, and brought him forth as a laughing-stock to make them merry. Men may be wise for the world, and yet such fools for the devil, Luke xii. 20.

The second point here purposely intended is this: They that look for peace and welfare from God, must not turn again to sin. Jer. xviii. 9, 10, When God speaks concerning a nation to build or plant it, if they do evil, and obey not his voice, then will he repent of the good he intended for them. Deut. xxix. 19, 20, When wicked men bless themselves in their hearts with a persuasion of peace and welfare, and resolve to go on in sin, God will not spare, but cause all his wrath and jealousy to smoke against them till they be destroyed. His charge unto his people, whom he brought out of Egypt, that they should not return thither any more, Deut. xvii. 16, teacheth us that he cannot endure men's turning back to the servitude of sin, which was figured by Egyptian bondage; and as God punished the Jews, that would needs return thither, with sword, famine, and pestilence till they were

destroyed, Jer. xlii. 10, 16, 17; so he will not spare any that turn back to the service of Satan in the works of sin.

The reasons hereof are four: first, Sin being the deadly disease of the soul, as Rom. v. 12, and vi. 23, turning back thereto must needs be a spiritual relapse, and so more dangerous than corporal, by how much spiritual death is worse than corporal. Hereupon Solomon saith, 'He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy,' Prov. xxix. 1.

Secondly, Returning unto sin is not only foolishness, but indeed most base and brutish behaviour, and therefore is resembled by the Holy Ghost to the dog's returning to the vomit, and the sow wallowing again in the mire, after she had been washed, 2 Cor. ii. 21, 22; Prov. xxvi. 11.

Thirdly, Sin provokes the Lord to anger, Jer. v. 16-19; and so takes away peace between God and us, Ps. xxxviii. 3; for it makes us wicked, and there is no peace to the wicked, Isa. xlvi. 22; 'It shall not go well with the wicked,' Eccles. viii. 13. 'A man cannot harden himself against God and prosper,' Job ix. 4. 'What peace,' saith Jehu, 'whilst the whoredoms of Jezebel remain yet in great number?' 2 Kings ix. 22.

Fourthly, As sin brings us into bondage, 2 Tim. ii. 26, so returning unto it doth renew and strengthen this spiritual bondage, under the dominion of Satan, as Mat. xii. 43-45, 'When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, and returneth again, he taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.' And therefore St Peter speaking of such, saith, 'Better for them never to have known the way of righteousness, than to turn from the holy commandment given unto them,' 2 Pet. ii. 21.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, first, Here see the fearful measure of man's corruption, in blindness of mind and hardness of heart, that notwithstanding this divine charge, upon such weighty grounds, of fearful evils accompanying relapse unto sin, yet wicked men do judge it both pleasing and profitable so to do. In the committing of it, sin is sweet unto them, Job xx. 12. Hereby they have their wealth, Acts xix. 15; and

hereupon grow desperate in sin, as Jer. xlv. 16, 17. This they would not do, if they did see or fear the evil of sin.

Secondly, This lets us see the main and general cause of war abroad, and of the fear thereof, and of other evils, at home in our own land. Surely, either they and we have not turned from our evil ways, or, upon some outward show thereof, have made revolt and relapse thereto again. This we should consider, to stir up our hearts to sound conversion from our sins, and to constant resolution against relapse thereto.

For admonition, Every child of God must yield obedience to this holy charge, and beware of turning back to sin; and, to arm their souls against relapse, lay to heart the four former grounds or reasons. It is no small matter to transgress any commandment of God, Ps. l. 16, 17. God disavoweth such from laying claim to covenant with him, and will cast them away, as he did Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 23; yea, destroy them, Prov. xiii. 13. Add also this consideration, that God's favour is better than life, Ps. lxxiii. 3; and shall we lose it for the pleasure of sin? Then are we not like Moses, who chose rather to suffer affliction with God's people, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, Heb. xi. 25; nor like Paul, who had rather die than lose his rejoicing, in the furtherance of the gospel, by abstaining from a thing lawful, which was outward maintenance for preaching, 1 Cor. ix. 19. What then could have drawn him to disgrace the gospel by returning unto sin? If we well consider of these things, we shall say with Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can we do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'

Ver 9. *Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.*

In this verse, and the rest to the end of this psalm, are propounded the special branches of that peace and welfare which God vouchsafeth to his people and saints, not returning unto folly. The first of these is salvation, here undoubtedly assured to be nigh to those that fear God, and also amplified by the end for which God gives it to his people, viz., that glory may dwell amongst them. By salvation, the blessing prayed for in the seventh verse, is here meant deliverance and freedom from all those evils

and miseries that any way lay upon them, which blessing is here undoubtedly assured to those that fear God.

So as in the first part of the verse this point is plain :

God's salvation is undoubtedly nigh to those that fear him. God will certainly vouchsafe, to such as truly fear him, both temporal deliverance and preservation from evils, and spiritual and eternal salvation in heaven. Prov. xix. 23, 'The fear of the Lord tendeth to life : and he that hath it shall abide satisfied ; he shall not be visited with evil.' Ps. xxv. 12, 13, 'His soul shall dwell at ease.' Ps. xxxiii. 18, 19, 'The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.' Ps. xxxi. 19, 20, 'How great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee ! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man,' &c.

The reason hereof is plain. First, The true fear of God is a fruit of his Holy Spirit, Isa. xi. 2 ; which unites us unto Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 17 ; and entitles us unto covenant with him, in the nearest bond of mystical union, 1 Cor. xii. 13. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him ; he will shew them his covenant,' Ps. xxv. 14. Now they that are truly in covenant with God, have true title to all the blessings thereof, even to preservation on earth and salvation in heaven ; for there is no want to them that fear him, Ps. xxxiv. 9.

Secondly, The true fear of God moves a man to eschew evil, Job i. 1 ; Prov. xiv. 27 ; and to cleave unto God in holy obedience, Jer. xxxii. 40. Now to such belongs the salvation of the Lord : Acts xiii. 26, 'Whoever amongst you feareth God, unto you is the word of this salvation sent.'

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction : it shews the miserable condition of those that want the fear of God ; for salvation must needs be far from them. For they that want the fear of God are wicked, Ps. xxxvi. 1, and salvation is far from them, Ps. cxix. 155. Howsoever it be true in the world, that they who work wickedness are set up, yet it is not so with God : he puts a difference between those that fear him, and those that fear him not, Eccles. viii. 12, 13, as he did be-

tween the Egyptians and the Israelites, Exod. viii. 22, 23.

For admonition, it serves two ways : first, To search and try whether we be such as truly fear God, that so we may know God's salvation belongs unto us. The infallible marks hereof are three : first, A constant care and endeavour to shun all sin : Prov. iii. 11, 'Fear the Lord, and depart from evil.' Chap. viii. 13, 'The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.' Chap. xiv. 27, 'The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.' This is plain by the contrary, Gen. xx. 12. Where the fear of God is wanting, there is no conscience of sin, Ps. xxxvi. 1 : secondly, True delight in God's commandments, testified by obedience thereto, Ps. cxii. 1 : thirdly, To be plentiful in all well-doing according to our places, Job i. 1, 8 ; Prov. xiv. 2.

Secondly, Every one that wants the fear of God, and desires his salvation, must labour to get it ; for though it be a fruit of the Spirit, Isa. xi. 2, yet there is means to be used for the obtaining of it, which is required at our hands ; and that is consideration and prayer. The consideration is twofold : first and principally, Of God himself ; secondly, Of ourselves.

Our consideration of God respecteth his properties and his works. His special properties to be considered for this end are six :

First, His infinite greatness, which doth evince his presence : see Ps. cxlv. 3, 'Great is the Lord,' &c. ; 1 Kings viii. 27 ; Jer. xxiii. 24. Now God's presence is fearful, Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

Secondly, His infinite wisdom, whereby he knoweth all things, even the most hidden thoughts : Ps. cxlvii. 5, 'His understanding is infinite ;' and Ps. cxxxix. 2, 3, 'Thou understandest my thoughts afar off,' &c. Heb. iv. 13, 'All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.'

Thirdly, His infinite purity and holiness, which cannot admit fellowship with the least sin : 1 John i. 5, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all ;' and 2 Cor. vi. 14, 'What communion hath light with darkness !'

Fourthly, His power and justice, both which make him a consuming fire against sin, Heb. xii. 28, 29, with Mat. x. 28.

Fifthly, His mercy in pardon and forgiveness : Ps. cxxx. 4, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou

mayst be feared.' Whereon Noah, being moved with fear, prepared an ark, &c., Heb. xi. 7.

Sixthly, His works of power, and wisdom, and justice: as Ps. lxxxix. 7, 'God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints.' &c.; Ps. cxxxix. 13, 14, Specially the day of judgment; Eccles. xii. 13, 14, 'Fear God, for God will bring every work into judgment;' Acts xxiv. 25, 'As he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.'

Our consideration of ourselves is of our own frailty and vanity, being but dust and ashes, Gen. xviii. 27, 'For all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field,' Isa. xl. 6; 'And every man at his best estate is altogether vanity,' Ps. xxxix. 5.

With consideration we must join prayer; for that sanctifies all God's ordinances, 1 Tim. iv. 5; 1 Cor. iii. 6, and obtaineth the Spirit, Luke xi. 13, which worketh God's fear, Isa. xi. 2.

For comfort it makes greatly to those that serve God truly; for when they are in any distress or misery, they must think upon the privilege of this grace, and that will minister comfort unto them to know that God's salvation is near unto them.

*That glory may dwell in our land.* The end for which God sends his salvation to his people that do fear him—namely, that glory may dwell in their land. By glory he meaneth a happy and honourable estate both of church and commonwealth, in freedom from evils, and fruition of blessings both spiritual and corporal. By dwelling in their land is noted the long continuance of the same blessings amongst them.

Here, then, note that God would have the very land of his people that truly fear him to abide and continue in a glorious estate. God's salvation doth therefore come unto them that they may be renowned for glorious estate in abundance of blessings continued among them: Deut. v. 29, 'Oh that there were such an heart in my people, that they would fear me always, that it might go well with them and with their children for ever;' Ps. lxxxi. 13, &c., 'Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways,' &c. The like in Isa. xlvi. 18, and Ps. lxxii. 7.

The reasons hereof are two: first, Such as fear God are his by covenant: Mal. iii. 17, 'They shall be

mine, saith the Lord: even his sons and daughters;' 2 Cor. vi. 16, 'Now a natural father desires the honour and advancement of his natural children; much more then will God do it,' Luke xi. 13.

Secondly, God taketh pleasure in those that fear him, Ps. cxlvii. 11. He loveth their prosperity, and delighteth to make them glorious and renowned above others: as Ps. xxxv. 27, and clix. 4, 'He will beautify the meek with salvation;' Ps. xlv. 1-3, 'Because thou hadst a favour unto them;' Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'He is a sun and a shield: he gives grace and glory.'

*Quest.* How comes it to pass that God's people, fearing God, are yet sometimes in great contempt and reproach? as Ps. xlv. 10, &c.; 1 Cor. iv. 9, &c.

*Ans.* This may be either for trial of grace, as in Job; or for correction for sins committed by them, or by the wicked that live among them, as Ps. xlv. 10, 11; or else to give way to the wicked, in spite to them, to fulfil their sins for speedier judgment, as 1 Thes. ii. 16. For these reasons the outward glory of God's children may be eclipsed; but yet even then are they glorious with God through grace, as Isa. xlix. 5, and one day shall it be made manifest; as is promised, Isa. lxi. 3.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, It shews again the great benefit of true piety, as is noted before on ver. 7, God's salvation shall make them glorious that truly fear God. Take a view of the heads and branches of their renown, whereof the first and chiefest is the fruition of the true God himself in Christ, who is the great glory of those that truly fear him. He is 'the glory of their strength,' Ps. lxxxix. 17; 'The glory of his people,' Luke ii. 32. He is the King of glory: even coming into their hearts, and dwelling in them, and with them, Ps. xxiv. 7, &c., compared with John xiv. 23; 'Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me: my glory, and the luster up of mine head,' Ps. iii. 3.

The second branch of their renown and glory that truly fear God, is the fruition of God's saving ordinances of true religion and holy worship, vouchsafed to those that fear God, as a means to bring them to grace and glory; this was the prerogative of the Jews under the law, Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20; Rom. iii. 1, 2. The presence of the ark was to them a great glory,

as 1 Sam. iv. 21, 22; and so is the gospel unto us, 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14.

Thirdly, Glory doth here comprehend the good blessings of God's providence appertaining to outward estate, which, being enjoyed, make men renowned and glorious in this world, as victory, peace, plenty, and the like; whereof see fully, Deut. xxviii. 1, &c., to 15; all which attending those that fear the Lord, shew plainly the great worth of their piety, which, well observed, will arm us against the error and reproach of carnal men, that account it a vain thing to be godly, Job xxi. 15; Mal. iii. 14, and will make us say and think with Paul, that 'godliness is profitable to all things,' 1 Tim. vi. 6, 'having the promises of a double life,' 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Secondly, See here who be the true friends to the peace and prosperity of any place, as kingdom, town, or family—namely, such as fear God; for they bring glory to the place of their abode. God in Christ is with them; to them belong the holy ordinances of grace and glory, and also all comfortable blessings of God's providence respecting temporal welfare, as before is shewed. Hence God said to Abraham, the father of the faithful, 'Thou shalt be a blessing,' Gen. xii. 2, which also belongs to his godly posterity. Lot was so to Sodom, Gen. xix. 22; Jacob to Laban, chap. xxx. 27; Joseph to Potiphar's house, chap. xxxix. 2, 3; and to the land of Egypt, chap. xli. 38, &c. Not so the wicked; they trouble the state and place where they live: as Achan, Joshua vii. 25; and Ahab, 1 Kings xviii. 18. 'They consult shame to their own houses,' Hab. ii. 10; as Eli's wicked sons did bring ruin on their father's house, 1 Sam. ii. 30, &c., and iii. 13, 14. 'The sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed,' Isaiah lxxv. 20: 'and leave his name for a curse,' ver. 15.

For admonition two ways: first, To every one to beware of those things that move God to take away glory from a land; and these are especially three. First, Idolatry, see Ezek. ix.; there is their horrible idolatry, and chap. x. 4, the Lord begins to depart; secondly, Impiety and profaneness in the priests and ministers of God, 1 Sam. ii. 17, compared with chap. iv. 21, 22; thirdly, Barrenness in the people, when they profit not by the word of God, Mat. xxi. 43.

Secondly, To examine ourselves thoroughly whether we have the true fear of God before our eyes. The way of trial is shewed before, in the first admonition on the first point of this verse.

For comfort: it makes greatly to those that have the true fear of God in their hearts; they are surely entitled to glory. Though they may want it in this world, as 1 Cor. iv. 9, 13, yet in the world to come they shall have it, 2 Tim. iv. 8; Mat. xix. 28, 29; Luke xvi. 25.

Ver. 10. *Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

In this verse, and those that follow to the end of this psalm, the prophet doth particularly make instance in sundry gracious blessings, which God vouchsafeth to those that fear him, as beams of that glory which he will have to dwell amongst them when he sends them his salvation. These blessings he still propounds by couples, whereof this verse containeth two, mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, which, being here assured, without any special limitation from God or man alone, I think we may safely take them in that latitude of sense which may comprehend mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, both divine and human; that is, as they are vouchsafed from God to men, and also as they are exercised between man and man: the rather because, where either way these be wanting, glory doth not dwell there. Their meeting together and kissing each other are borrowed terms, serving to express more significantly the sweet and comfortable continuance of these gracious blessings amongst that people whom God will make glorious by his salvation.

Now then, understanding the words in this large sense, we have to note in them these particulars: first, That with whomsoever true glory makes abode, unto them both God's mercy and God's truth are undoubtedly vouchsafed. God's mercy is his gracious and favourable acceptance of them for his people, and his kind dealing with them, being received into covenant; and God's truth is his faithful performance of those gracious promises, which he hath made unto them. These do meet together with all those that God makes glorious in estate, as Ps. lxxxix. 1, 2, 24, 28, 33, 'I will sing

of the mercies of the Lord for ever; with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations,' &c.

The reason is plain; for this mercy and truth from God to men is the ground of their happiness and glorious estate; till God, of mere mercy and kindness, receive them into covenant, and then in faithfulness perform his gracious promises unto them, they lie dead in sin, and in spiritual bondage under Satan, the prince of darkness, being without Christ, without hope, without God in the world, see Eph. iv. 17, 18, and ii. 1, 12. But when God, out of his rich mercy, receiveth men into his love and favour, giving them a holy calling, whereby they are brought into covenant with him, then are they brought from darkness unto light, from the power of Satan unto God, Acts xxvi. 18; then they enter into the happy and honourable estate of sons and daughters unto God, which is no small glory, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction: this leads us plainly and rightly to see where true glory dwells, whether we speak of kingdom, city, town, family, or person—namely, where God's mercy and God's truth in the covenant of grace do certainly meet. 'Happy is that people, that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord,' Ps. cxliv. 15; for there mercy and truth from heaven are met, see Exod. xix. 5, 6, with Ps. lxxv. 4; Exod. xxxiii. 16. Of this mind was Paul, Acts xxvi. 29, when he wished Agrippa, a king, to be like him in Christianity. This also is Christ's judgment, Rev. ii. 9, with iii. 17. But most plainly, Jer. xxxiv. 8, 9, with I-sa. lxiii. 7. Jerusalem hereby is for a name and praise, &c.

Secondly, Here see the common error of the world, in judging of glory and renown by outward things, as large dominions, great wealth, pomp and pleasures; but unless with these God's mercy and truth do also meet, we may well say of them all, 'This their glory is their shame,' Phil. iii. 19; for in shame and confusion will they all end, without saving grace, as we may see in Babel, the glory of kingdoms, Isa. xlii. 19, &c.; Jer. li. 6, 7; and in Dives, the picture or pattern of worldly wealthy pictures.

For admonition, it serves effectually both to people in general, in towns and kingdoms, and to persons in particular in every family, that if they desire true glory should dwell among them, they make sure that God's mercy and truth do meet together with them, and in them. Now this mercy and truth is revealed in the word of the gospel, and indeed in the preaching of the gospel is offered unto all that hear it, Tit. ii. 11. They therefore that receive, believe, and obey the gospel, have God's mercy and truth to meet among them, and in them; and if their faith do work by love, Gal. v. 6, and their love be shewed by keeping God's commandments, 1 John v. 3, then they need not doubt of their glorious estate in God's esteem. It is true, the world derides this course and counsel, and think it a vain thing, Mat. iii. 14, 15. 'They call the proud happy, &c.; but wisdom is justified of her children,' Mat. xi. 19, and they that make trial shall find the comfort and assurance of it.

For comfort, it makes greatly to the godly, in whose hearts mercy and truth are met together, against the contempt and reproach of the world; for it is as the householder's kind welcome against the barking of his dogs. Let us therefore be of Paul's mind, 1 Cor. iv. 3, 'With me it is a very small thing, that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment.' And we shall feel his comfort; Rom. viii. 18, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us;' and 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;' and of David's, 2 Sam. vi. 21, 22, 'It was before the Lord, &c.; and I will yet be more vile than thus, &c.'

Secondly, Here note also, that where a state or people, or particular person, be truly glorious before God, there mercy and truth between man and man must be duly and conscientiously practised. They that are beautified with God's grace and favour, and other blessings of the covenant, must answer God's goodness with the exercise of mercy and faithfulness towards their brethren: 2 Cor. iv. 1, 'As we have received mercy of the Lord, we faint not,'—meaning, we labour faithfully to bring others to the participation of the same mercy. See it notably prac-

tised by David: Ps. li. 1, 13, 'Have mercy upon me, O God; and then will I teach transgressors thy ways,' &c.; as Ps. cì. 1, 'I will sing of mercy and judgment.' Ps. xxvi. 3, 'Thy loving-kindness is before me; and I have walked in thy truth.'

The reason hereof is plain: first, God's graces and blessings towards his children are, in a marvellous manner, operative in them, causing them to do the like towards their brethren, see Exod. xxxiv. 29. When Moses had conversed with the God of glories in the mount, he received glory into his countenance, which made his face to shine before the people; and so we all behold the glory of the Lord in Christ with open face, and are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, 2 Cor. iii. 18. His love in Christ constraineth us to love men's souls, and to seek their conversion, see chap. v. 14, &c.; Gal. i. 15-17; Ps. xvi. 2, 3.

Secondly, The want of mercy and truth towards our brethren declares us to be destitute of true grace, and liable to God's displeasure: Hosea iv. 1, 2, 'God hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy,' &c.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, it shews plainly that men's behaviour and carriage towards their brethren will discover and manifest their state and condition before God. A constant course in the exercise of mercy and truth toward men, by those that live in the church and profess the truth, shews plainly that God in Christ hath extended mercy and truth towards them; and so for other graces: 'As we have received mercy, we faint not,' 2 Cor. iv. 1,—meaning, in faithful dispensation of the truth, to bring others to the participation of the same mercy; for 'the love of Christ constraineth us,' chap. v. 14; see 1 John iii. 14. Hence are those exhortations to love and mercy, Mat. v. 44, 45; Luke vi. 36; Eph. v. 1.

For admonition, that we give ourselves to the exercise of mercy and truth toward our brethren, if we desire assurance of God's mercy and truth to our own souls, else we discredit God's works of grace, whereof we make profession, if no fruit thereof appear towards our brethren. Those in whom the

devil works by suggestion and temptation unto evil are very forward and bold to draw others unto evil; and shall not the power of God's Spirit in grace be as mighty in the godly to move them to well-doing? See how Paul laboured for the glory of God in the conversion of others, when he had once tasted of God's mercy and grace in his own, 1 Cor. xv. 10; Acts xx. 24; 2 Cor. xi. 28, 29; Phil. ii. 17.

For comfort, it makes greatly to those that give themselves to the exercise of mercy and truth towards their brethren; for they shall find mercy with God, and the truth of his promises shall be made good unto them; see James ii. 13, 'Mercy rejoiceth against judgment.'

*Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* The second couple of heavenly blessings most assuredly vouchsafed in Christ's kingdom to all that truly fear God; which, as the former, being generally propounded without any limitation to God or man alone, I take so largely as to comprehend both God's righteousness and peace vouchsafed unto men, and the righteousness and peace which men are to exercise and prosecute one towards another; because indeed, if either of these be wanting, the glory of God's salvation is not yet come. Now, their kissing one another is a metaphorical phrase, taken from lovers and friends meeting together, who use to greet one another with a kiss of love, here serving very fitly to set out the sweet accord and comfort of grace amongst God's people.

Here then we have to note two things touching the state of God's people in Christ's kingdom, truly fearing God, for their comfortable fruition of righteousness and peace: first, That they have these graces truly vouchsafed unto them from God; secondly, That they do most lovingly and sweetly exercise the same one towards another.

For the first, In Christ's kingdom God doth most lovingly bestow on those that truly fear him both his righteousness and his peace. God's righteousness, bestowed on his people, is not his own divine essential righteousness, for that indeed is infinite and incommunicable; but it is the righteousness of Christ, as he is mediator, God and man, which he fulfilled for his redeemed, and is accepted of God as theirs that do truly believe. Consider Heb. vii. 2 :

Phil. iii. 9; 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Cor. i. 30; Jer. xxiii. 6. And God's peace, sweetly accompanying the same, is peace of conscience, a sweet persuasion of reconciliation, and so of love and favour with God in Christ: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' Chap. xiv. 17, 'His kingdom stands not in meat and drink, but in righteousness and peace.'

The reason hereof is in God alone: first, He bestows on his church righteousness in Christ, to make a way for his mercy by the satisfying of his justice; for all have sinned, and so in themselves are unable of glory, Rom. iii. 23: 'The unrighteous cannot inherit the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. vi. 9. Therefore God, intending in mercy to free his elect from hell, which their sins did deserve, and to bring them to heaven, which for want of righteousness they of themselves could never attain unto, doth bestow upon them Christ's perfect righteousness, as he is mediator, both active and passive, that by his sufferings they might be freed from hell, Gal. iii. 13, and by his obedience in doing all that the law required for them might be made righteous, and so worthy of life, Rom. v. 19, viii. 30, and x. 4. Then with righteousness he gives peace of conscience by the work of his Holy Spirit, that those who fear him may have confidence and boldness with God in prayer, 1 John iii. 19, 21, and also may have in them matter of stay and comfort against the hatred and contempt and persecution of the world, John xvi. 33.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction: first, See the bountifulness of God in Christ Jesus towards those that fear him; he multiplies heavenly blessings in great variety and abundance; he adds grace to grace, and that by couples, mercy and truth, righteousness and peace. Well may we say with the prophet, Ps. xxxiii. 5, 'The earth is full of the loving-kindness of the Lord.' Ps. lxxxvi. 15, 'Thou art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.' Ps. cxxx. 7, 'With the Lord is mercy, with him is plenteous redemption.' The riches of his grace and mercy in Christ are unsearchable, Eph. iii. 8. That which he said to Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 19, he doth fully accomplish in

Christ: 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee.' 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,' Col. i. 19. 'And if he spared not his own Son, but gave him for us, how shall not he with him give us all things also?' Rom. viii. 32.

*Quest.* What shall we say to these things? Rom. viii. 31.

*Ans.* Surely we must labour to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, Col. i. 10, and in some measure labour to answer God's bounty, which requires, first, Conversion from sin, Rom. ii. 4; secondly, Love to the word of grace, 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3; thirdly, That we admire God's goodness, Ps. xxxi. 9, and cxvi. 12; fourthly, That we praise him for it, Ps. cxxxvi. throughout, and cxlv. 1, 7, &c.; Eph. i. 3; fifthly, That we order our lives aright, Rom. xii. 1. This hath the promise of God's salvation, Ps. i. 23.

Secondly, See here plain evidence of the miserable state of all unrighteous persons, that keep a course in sin. Undoubtedly God's salvation is not come unto them, for he that is the servant of sin is quit or freed from righteousness, Rom. vi. 20, and salvation is far from such, Ps. cxix. 155; neither can they have any true peace, Isa. xlvi. 22.

Thirdly, Here see both evidence and assurance for those that fear God and believe in him through Christ, of their blessed and happy estate of salvation; for God's righteousness and God's peace do kiss in their souls. By faith they are made righteous in Christ, Rom. iii. 28; Gal. iii. 11, 24; and when they are justified they have peace with God, Rom. v. 1; for God gives both joy and peace in believing, Rom. xv. 13. Papists call it a doctrine of presumption to lay claim to the knowledge and assurance of salvation by ordinary grace. But wisdom is justified of her children, Mat. xi. 19. 'If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. And this is the witness, that God hath given to us eternal life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life,' 1 John v. 9-11, 13; add 1 Cor. ii. 12, with Rom. vi. 23, and viii. 16, 17; and by effects, 1 John iii. 14; 2 Pet. i. 5, &c.



For admonition, this serves effectually to move all those that desire in their souls the true comfort of peace with God, to labour to be partakers of God's righteousness; for righteousness and peace do kiss one another. He that is made righteous by faith in Christ, shall likewise by the same faith have peace with God through Christ; 'for he is our peace,' Eph. ii. 14; he makes peace by the blood of his cross, Col. i. 20; therefore at his birth the angels sung, 'Glory to God on high, and in earth peace,' Luke ii. 14. Now Christ's righteousness is made ours 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.' Now this faith is the work of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iv. 13, in the ministry of the gospel, Rom. x. 17; and sheweth itself to be true by good works, of love to God and to our brethren, Gal. v. 6.

For comfort, this makes greatly to those that truly fear God; professing the gospel, they undoubtedly be righteous before God, and in him they shall have peace, John xvi. 33; Isa. lviii. 1, 2.

Secondly, Here note that Christian righteousness and peace are conscientiously exercised between man and man, of all those that fear God, living in his church; see Isa. xi. 6, 7, 9, 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb. None shall hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.' See instance, Acts ii. 44, 46; and in Paul, Acts ix. 1, &c., with ver. 26, and chap. xx. 24; Phil. ii. 17.

The reason hereof is in the powerful work of God's Spirit, which gives them a holy calling; and therein doth subdue corruption so far, that sin shall not reign in them, to keep them in the practice of injustice and contention; and also doth renew the graces of God's image in the soul, which stands in righteousness and true holiness, and sets them into the kingdom of Christ, which is righteousness and peace, Rom. xiv. 17.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction: first, See by the contrary the fearful case of those that give themselves to the practice of injustice and contention: they are not yet called of God with a holy calling, but remain in the fearful case of corrupt nature, see Rom. i. 28, 29, 31.

For admonition, that as we desire the comfort and assurance of God's salvation, so we conscientiously give ourselves to the practice of these virtues, of righteousness and peace towards our brethren.

For comfort, to those that conscientiously follow peace and righteousness amongst men, it is a comfortable assurance that God hath bestowed on them righteousness and peace with Christ.

Ver. 11. *Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.*

Because the graces and blessings of Christ's kingdom, mentioned in the former verse, be of great worth and comfort, and indeed do manifest the presence of his salvation, therefore doth the prophet here further insist in two of them, truth and righteousness, letting us know whence these two shall shew themselves—to wit, the one from earth, the other from heaven.

For the first, 'Truth shall spring out of the earth.' The truth here spoken of must needs be such as doth accompany God's salvation in Christ, and that is true and faithful dealing, both in word and truth. The springing of it out of the earth is the plain and certain evidence thereof in the lives and actions of men: earth being here put by a metonymy of the subject for men that dwell thereon, as if he should have said, It is so certain that mercy and truth shall meet, that truth in word and deed, true and faithful dealing, shall be plainly and plentifully exercised among men living here on earth.

Mark, then, that in Christ's kingdom, when God's salvation comes to men, true and faithful dealing in word and deed shall be plainly and plentifully exercised here on earth between man and man, Ps. xv. 2. Every citizen of Christ's kingdom speaketh the truth in his heart; Ezek. xviii. 9, They that look to live with God must deal truly; Zech. viii. 3, Jerusalem, which is God's true church, is a city of truth; 1 Cor. v. 8, The Christian's passover is not the feast of Easter week, but a life led in sincerity and truth.

The reason hereof is plain: first, God, who sends his salvation, is a God of truth, Ps. xxxi. 5; Jer. x. 10. He is truth, Ps. li. 6, and is a teacher of all those whom he means to save, Isa. liv. 13; John vi. 35. Now this is his lesson, that his people should

love the truth. Zecl. viii. 29, and speak the truth every man to his neighbour, ver. 16.

Secondly, When God sends his salvation to men, he bestows upon them his Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of truth, John xiv. 17; leading men into all truth, chap. xvi. 13; whose fruit is in all truth, Eph. v. 9.

Thirdly, When God sends his salvation to men he gives them his word of truth, both law and gospel. For the law, see Mal. ii. 6, 'The law of truth was in his mouth': and the gospel is 'the word of truth,' Eph. i. 13. This word of truth, being sown in the ground of our hearts, and watered by the dew of grace, springs up and grows as good seed in good ground.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, first, See here how powerful the work of God is in the hearts of men in the ministry of the word, blessed by the Spirit; it changeth their very nature, which of itself is full of all unrighteousness, and loveth lying and untruth, as Rom. i. 29.

Secondly, See here to whom God's salvation is come, whose state God makes glorious in grace,—namely, those that, having the word of truth amongst them, receive therewith that blessing of the Spirit, that they love truth in their hearts and practise it in their lives, Eph. iv. 24, 25. But as for those that make no conscience of true and upright dealing among men, undoubtedly they are out of God's kingdom and state of grace, having the devil for their god, see John viii. 44; Rev. xxi. 8, and xxii. 15. This doth charge a fearful state upon the pillars of popish religion, who maintain and practise equivocation and officious lies; see, and apply to them, 2 Thes. ii. 9, 10; 1 Tim. vi. 5; 2 Tim. iii. 8; Titus i. 14. God's true servants in the ministry 'can do nothing against the truth, but for it,' 2 Cor. xiii. 8.

For admonition, to every one that lives in God's church, that we labour to feel in our hearts the love of the truth, and to express the springing and growing of it in our lives by our words and by our deeds, wherein we conscientiously and constantly both speak the truth and do the truth, else we shall not feel nor manifest God's salvation to be come unto us. How can he say the God of truth is his God, and hath

taught him; or that the Spirit of truth is given to him, which leads men into all truth, whose fruit is in all truth; or that the word of truth, as good seed, was sown in his heart, who makes no conscience of truth in word and behaviour? See the apostle's pressing of this duty, Eph. iv. 25, upon ver. 20–24, which shews also the way and means whereby it must be attained.

For consolation, this makes greatly to all those that speak the truth, and deal truly with their brethren in a constant and conscionable course; for this shews that God's salvation is come unto them, that the God of truth is their God, that the Spirit of truth is given them, and the word of truth is sanctified unto them.

*And righteousness shall look down from heaven.*

Here he shews whence comes that true righteousness, whereby such as fear God in the church must be justified and saved, namely, from heaven. This righteousness is the righteousness of Christ, as mediator, who as God is from heaven, and is revealed unto men in the gospel, which is a doctrine from heaven, as Mat. xxi. 25, with Gal. i. 11, 12. Mark then,

When God's salvation comes to men here on earth, he shews unto them the righteousness of Christ, which is from heaven: Rom. iii. 21, 22, 'The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by the faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.'

This he doth for the praise of the glory of his grace, in saving sinners with full satisfaction to his justice. For the unrighteous (as all are by nature, Rom. iii. 9, 10) cannot inherit the kingdom of God; therefore what the law could not do, because we could not fulfil it, God provides to be done for his elect in Christ, Rom. viii. 3, and when they believe, makes them partakers of it, that so he that rejoiceth might rejoice in the Lord, 1 Cor. i. 30, 31; for boasting is taken away by the law of faith, Rom. iii. 27.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, It shews unto us the unspeakable riches of God's wisdom, grace, and

goodness in Christ Jesus to his elect; of wisdom, in finding out this way of justification to a sinner, which no created nature could of itself ever conceive, 1 Cor. ii. 7, 9; of grace and goodness, in bestowing the same freely on his elect, 1 Cor. i. 30; 2 Cor. v. 21.

Secondly, This shews us the fearful judgment of blindness of mind lying on the church of Rome at this day, who are so far from beholding this righteousness which looks down from heaven, that they deride it, calling it a new no-justice, a fantastical apprehension of that which is not, a false faith, and untrue imputation; Rhem. on Rom. iii. 22. Nay, they shew such enmity unto it, that they pronounce them accursed who by true faith rest and rely upon it alone for justification before God; Council. Triad., sess. 6, can. 9-12. Of them is that spiritual judgment verified, Rom. xi. 8, 'God hath given them the spirit of slumber; eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear.' They, like Israel, following after the law of righteousness, have not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they seek it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, Rom. ix. 31. 'They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God: for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,' Rom. x. 3, 4. Well therefore may we say of them, Hear, ye despisers, and wonder, and vanish away; the veil hangs over your eyes, when the gospel is read unto this day. God hath sent upon them strong delusions to believe lies, because they have not received the love of the truth, 2 Thes. ii. 9, 10.

For admonition, it serves very effectually to all that live in the church of Christ, to take notice of this bounty of God in revealing by the gospel this righteousness of Christ, that we may endeavour to walk worthy of the same: first, In labouring to conceive rightly of this righteousness of Christ which God causeth to look down from heaven; secondly, In giving all diligence to be made partakers thereof: both these see in Paul, Phil. iii. 9-11. Indeed they are both the gift of God, but yet in the use of means, the word and prayer, wherein we must wait for the work of the Spirit, as the poor did at the pool of

Bethesda for the moving of the water, John v. 1-3.

For comfort, it makes greatly to those that know Christ crucified, and do rest and rely upon his merits for justification and salvation. Oh, God hath done great things for them: see Mat. xiii. 16, 'Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.'

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Ver. 12. *Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase.*

Here the prophet proceedeth in expressing further blessings that accompany God's salvation in the kingdom of grace. The blessings here mentioned are of two sorts: first from the Lord, then from the earth. From the Lord, in these words, 'Yea, the Lord will give that which is good.' Here he meaneth whatsoever gift or blessing is good for his people, whether it be spiritual or temporal; for so largely is the word here used taken in Scripture, as we shall see in the confirmation of the point here to be observed, which is this—

When God sends among men his salvation in Christ, he will give to such as fear him whatsoever is good for them, both for their souls and bodies. See this confirmed, first in general, Exod. xxxiii. 19, 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee;' Ps. xxxiv. 10, 'They that seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.' Then particularly, for blessings temporal: Deut. xxviii. 11, 12, 'The Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure; the heaven to give thee rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand.' Also for blessings heavenly and spiritual: Eph. i. 3, 'He blesseth us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, (or things) in Christ,' even with the gift of the holy Ghost, which is the good thing indeed for the soul. Ps. cxliii. 10, 'Thy Spirit is good;' and it is God's gift in the kingdom of grace, Acts ii. 16, and x. 44, 45.

This is it which makes the souls of God's people like a watered garden, Jer. xxxi. 12. Herewith doth he satiate the souls of the priests with fatness, and satisfy the people with goodness, ver. 14; as

Paul was persuaded of the Romans that they were full of goodness, Rom. xv. 14, and of the Corinthians, that in everything they were enriched by him, and came behind in no gift, 1 Cor. i. 5, 7.

The reason hereof is threefold. First, To make known the riches of his mercy and goodness in Christ—how well he is pleased in him, that with him he will give all manner of blessings, Rom. viii. 32.

Secondly, To draw men unto him, by beholding the abundance of blessings which accompany the receiving of Christ by faith; for though many times they want the possession, yet the right of all God's blessings belong to them that are in Christ, 1 Cor. iii. 21–23. Thus was Simon Magus drawn to be baptized, Acts viii. 13; as Esther viii. 17, 'The Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews.'

Thirdly, To keep those with him that come in sincerity, and to move them to cleave fast unto the Lord in faith and love: as John vi. 68, 'To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.' So Paul reasoneth, Rom. viii. 31, 32, 35, 'What shall we say to these things?' &c. 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' &c.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, It opens unto us the true and right way, whereby we may receive from God that which is good. Few men doubt of his sufficiency and ability, but how they should be interested thereunto, and partake thereof, they know not. Well, mark here, God's good gifts come with his salvation in Christ; therefore seek the Lord in Christ, and thou shalt lack nothing that is good, Ps. xxxiv. 10; to this agrees Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' For godliness hath the promise of both kind of blessings, 1 Tim. iv. 8; in the means whereof we must endeavour, as John iv. 10; Ezek. xlvii. 1, compared with Isa. lv. 1, &c.

*Object.* Such as take this course are yet in much want.

*Ans.* It may be so for outward things; for the disciple is not above his master: now the Son of man hath not whereon to lay his head, Mat. viii. 20;

and the promises of temporal blessings are to be understood with the exception of the cross. Yet know that God's grace is sufficient, as 2 Cor. xii. 9, compared with 2 Cor. iv. 16. And in the blessings of grace he makes supply to all temporal wants, as Phil. iv. 11, &c.

Secondly, See here plain evidence of the world's unbelief: 'Lord, who hath believed our report?' Isa. liii. 1. Are men persuaded that good gifts from God, both temporal and spiritual, accompany his salvation in Christ? No, surely; for then they would labour first to become religious, because that is the way to get God's favour in Christ, as John xiv. 6. Solomon saith, Prov. xix. 6, 'Every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts,'—that is, seeks to be in his favour. But few take this course; nay, they rather seek to the god of this world, the devil; for so indeed they do that seek to thrive by ungodly courses, as oppression, lying, stealing, and the like.

For admonition it serves two ways: first, To natural men living in the church, that they take notice whence good things come, both spiritual and corporal, and thereupon labour for that estate whereby they may be interested thereto. Hereto two things are required—repentance from dead works; for sins withhold good things, Jer. v. 25; and faith in Christ; for so is Christ himself ours, and all things with him.

If any say, They that regard not these things speed well in the world; let them consider whether here they have not their portion, as Ps. xvii. 14, and Luke xvi. 25, 'Thou in thy life-time receivest thy good things.' But for the best blessings, they have no part in them while they live in sin, and want faith, as John xiv. 17; Acts viii. 21; they have starved souls in pampered and well-clad bodies.

Secondly, This must stir up the godly, who have received good things from God, to be careful to continue in God's goodness, as Rom. xi. 22, which is by keeping faith and a good conscience, 1 Tim. i. 18, 19; Heb. x. 39.

For comfort, this makes greatly to the godly in worldly wants; for certainly God will give that which is good, and though the outward man perish, yet is the inward man renewed daily, 2 Cor. iv. 16; and

we rejoice in hope of the glory of God, Rom. v. 2; James i. 9. The brother of low degree must rejoice in his exaltation with God; for, being a believer in Christ Jesus, he is rich in God, though poor in the world; as James ii. 5. and Rev. ii. 9, 'I know thy poverty, but thou art rich.'

*And our land shall yield her increase.* The second blessing accompanying God's salvation in the kingdom of grace, here assured to those that fear God; and it is merely temporal, concerning the plentiful increase of the fruits of the earth where they live that fear God. Mark, then, in this part of their acknowledgment, two things: first, Their title to the land; secondly, The blessing whereof they assure themselves from it.

For the first: God's people call the land of Canaan where they dwell, their land, their own land: ver. 9, 'That glory may dwell in our land;' 2 Chron. ii. 16. The land of Israel.

It was God's gift to them and their progenitors by covenant, as Gen. xii. 7, and xiii. 15; Ps. xlv. 2, 3; 2 Chron. vi. 38; Judges xi. 24; 2 Chron. xx. 6, 7.

And if we look for blessing and comfort in the place where we live, as the Israelites here assure themselves, we must make sure we have good title to it from the Lord; for there is small hope of God's blessing to accompany the devil's getting, as 1 Kings xxi. 19; Jer. xxii. 13; Micah ii. 1, 2; Hab. ii. 9, 10; Isa. v. 8.

The second thing to be here observed is purposely intended, namely, when God's salvation in Christ comes among a people, it brings with it plentiful increase of the fruits of the earth, see Ps. lxxvii. 2, 6, and lxxii. 16; Solomon's kingdom there spoken of was a type of Christ's kingdom. See the truth hereof by God's special blessings accompanying those that in sincerity have received the covenant: as Gen. xiii. 2, 6, 'Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and gold; their substance was so great, that the land was not able to bear them;' and chap. xxiv. 35, 'The Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great,' &c. Yea, also, Isaac sowed and received a hundredfold, Gen. xxvi. 12; also Jacob was a blessing to Laban, and himself increased exceedingly, Gen. xxx. 27, 43.

The reason hereof is this: God's salvation bringeth

to men reconciliation in Christ; for as he is God's salvation, Isa. xlix. 6, so in him God reconciles the world to himself, 2 Cor. v. 19; Col. i. 20; Rom. v. 10; and hence comes a double benefit tending to plenty.

First, The removal of the curse, which Adam's sin brought even upon the ground, Gen. iii. 17; for though want may befall the godly, yet not as a curse, Gal. iii. 13; it is only (as sickness is, 1 Cor. xi. 32) a chastisement and correction.

Secondly, Hereby a land is entitled to the special blessings of God's providence that bring plenty; as Deut. xi. 9-12, And no marvel, for if he have given Christ, how shall he not with him give us all things? Rom. viii. 32.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, Here we may see that the earthly blessings of God's providence are attendants on the heavenly blessings of his grace; great plenty doth accompany true piety. When men first seek God's kingdom and his righteousness, all outward things needful shall be ministered unto them, Mat. vi. 3. Godliness hath the promise of all manner of blessings, both temporal and eternal, 1 Tim. iv. 8; this we may see, as before, in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so manifested afterward to God's people by special promise. Lev. xxvi. 3-5, 'If ye walk in my statutes, I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit,' &c. And as he spake with his mouth, so he performed indeed unto David, a man according to his own heart, whom God advanced from a shepherd's crook to a sceptre, Ps. lxxxviii. 70, 71; and raised him on high, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, and gave him great substance, as 1 Chron. xxix. 3, 4. But more apparently to Solomon, while he continued upright with God, see 1 Chron. xxix. 25; and 2 Chron. i. 12, 14, 15. And to Jehoshaphat, who walked in the ways of David, God gave riches and honour in abundance. And the right hereof still continueth to all the godly: 'All are yours,' 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. If at any time it be otherwise with God's people, it is either for correction of sin, as Jer. v. 25, or for trial of grace, as in Job.

Secondly, See here the error of many worldlings, who do not once think that the yearly increase of

fruit from the earth, and from trees, doth depend upon the special will and providence of God appointing the same every year; but either, like mere naturalists, ascribe it to that virtue and power which God gave them by creation, or more profanely attribute it to the aspects and influences of stars and planets. It is true, God gave virtue and power in the beginning to the earth, and to fruitful trees to bring forth fruit according to their kind, Gen. i. 11, 12. And the sun, moon, and stars, by heat and light, do work upon the earth, and trees that grow thereon; but not so as that some of them, by a more favourable aspect, should cause plenty, and others, by a malignant aspect, should cause scarcity. No, no; men's behaviour in sin or in obedience, do work more powerfully for scarcity and plenty than any stars, as is plain, Deut. xxviii.

For admonition it makes two ways:

First, That they who look for plentiful increase from the earth and trees in the place where they live, do break off the course of sin, which brings scarcity, Ps. cvii. 34; Jer. v. 25, and labour to become truly godly, in receiving, believing, and obeying the word of God, which doth give title to the blessing of plenty, as Lev. xxvi. 2-4; 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Secondly, That we who live in God's church, where the word of salvation is made known, beware of being barren in grace, lest the earth and trees that grow thereon rise up in judgment against us; for they, by Christ's coming in the gospel, received by faith, become more fruitful unto men, Ps. lxxvii. 5, 6. How then shall we escape if we continue barren of grace in heart and obedience in life towards God? Consider Christ's cursing the barren fig-tree, Mat. xxi. 19; and his command to cut that down which kept the ground barren, Luke xiii. 6, 7; also the fearful state of those that be barren ground to the Lord, Heb. vi. 7, 8, add also Mat. xi. 21, 23.

If any ask, How we may be fruitful to God for his salvation in Christ? I answer, By labouring to add grace unto grace, as 2 Pet. i. 5, 7, 9. And amongst other fruits of godliness beseming the gospel, look to these two: first, The maintenance of God's worship and service, which hath the promise of plenty, Prov. iii. 9, 10; Haggai ii. 17-19, compared with chap. i. 9, 11; Mal. iii. 10. Secondly, The charitable

relieving of the poor, Deut. xv. 10, 11; Prov. xi. 24, 25; Heb. vi. 10; 2 Cor. ix. 6, 10.

For comfort this makes greatly to all those that conscionably receive and obey the word of salvation, the holy gospel. Undoubtedly the outward blessings of God's providence shall be ministered unto them so far as it is good for them, see Ps. xxiii. 1, 2, 5, 6, xxxiv. 10, and xxxvii. 3. And when there shall be any defect or want for temporal things, God will make supply unto them by the comforts of his favour in Christ and grace of his Spirit, see James i. 9, and ii. 5; whereupon, with Paul, they are taught both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need, &c., Phil. iv. 13.

Ver. 13. *Righteousness shall go before him, and he shall set her steps in the way.*

In these words he doth the third time give instance in a special virtue accompanying God's salvation in Christ—namely, justice or righteousness, which, ver. 10, he said kissed with peace: first, In Christ, who is the true Melchisedec and King of Salem, Heb. vii. 2—that is, king of righteousness and of peace: then in all those that are his redeemed and saved, Rom. v. 1. Secondly, Lest men should mistake in a grace and virtue of that necessity and worth, ver. 11, he shews whence it shews itself—namely, from heaven: and so it is not a mere human civil righteousness, but the righteousness of God in Christ, as Rom. x. 3, 4; Phil. iii. 9; with the fruit thereof, inherent righteousness renewed by the Spirit. Thirdly, That men might better know the excellency of God's salvation in Christ, and discern where it comes; here he shews that this virtue shall shew itself in Christ's kingdom, going before him, and ever accompanying him where he brings salvation. 'Righteousness shall go before him'—that is, the publishing of justice and righteousness shall go before Christ when he brings salvation. 'He shall set her steps in the way'—that is, Christ shall set the steps of righteousness in the way that he goes with salvation; which seems to import both evidence and settled continuance of the practice of virtue in the kingdom of Christ, where God's salvation comes.

Here, then, mark these two points: first, By collection from this verse, compared with the former, that Christ Jesus, who brings salvation to his church,

is Jehovah—that is, true and very God; for he before whose face righteousness walketh, is he that bringeth salvation; that this verse saith, compared with the 9th; and he is Jehovah, ver. 12, for to no other can the affix here used be referred; and Jer. xxiii. 6, and xxxiii. 16, in the title there given to Christ it is most plain, ‘The Lord our righteousness;’ and 1 John v. 20; Isa. ix. 6; Rom. ix. 5, ‘Christ is over all, God blessed for ever.’

And needs he must be so, because he was to justify, to sanctify, and to save; else none could be saved, as 1 Cor. vi. 9; Rev. xxi. 27. Now no creature could do these things, Rom. viii. 3, 33; therefore, Isa. xliii. 11, ‘I the Lord, and beside me no Saviour.’

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction: first, Against the Arians, that denied Christ to be God. But Jehovah is God. Now Christ is Jehovah.

Secondly, It shews us the depth of man’s misery, that by no created power could be delivered, Acts iv. 12; Isa. lxiii. 5. The resemblance of a captive, unransomable but by the bondage of the king’s only son, doth plainly illustrate our natural misery.

For admonition two ways: first, To the wicked, that they take heed of such a course of life, whereby they stand in opposition and enmity against Christ; for Christ is God, and so it is a fearful thing to fall into his hand, Heb. x. 31. ‘Who hath hardened himself against God, and hath prospered?’ Job ix. 4. Now it is true that all sin separates, Isa. lix. 2, and therefore they must break off the course of every sin; and in particular, in a more special manner, both repent of for the time past, and for the time to come beware of, these four sins:

First, Ignorance of God in Christ, for in the knowledge of him stands eternal life, John xv. 3; and therefore not to know him must needs be dangerous; not only shameful, 1 Cor. xv. 34, but damnable, 2 Thes. i. 7, 8.

Secondly, Hardness of heart, to be obstinate in sin, as Deut. xxix. 19, 20; see Mark iii. 5, ‘He looked round about upon them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.’ Such have not God’s Spirit, which takes away the stony heart,

Ezek. xxxvi. 26, and so are none of his, Rom. viii. 9.

Thirdly, Persecuting God’s holy religion, or the professors of it, Acts ix. 4, 5; 1 Thes. ii. 15, 16.

Fourthly, Idolatry, that stirs up jealousy in the Lord against men, 1 Cor. x. 22. What husband can endure the adultery of his wife? see Prov. vi. 34, 35, ‘Jealousy is the rage of a man.’ &c. What, then, is the Lord’s jealousy, which he professeth is kindled by idolatry? Exod. xx. 5.

Secondly, To those that profess the faith, and lay claim to redemption and salvation by Christ Jesus, they must endeavour themselves to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, Col. i. 10. And for this end they must first labour to partake of the main benefits of Christ’s incarnation, which are redemption, adoption, justification, and sanctification in this life.

Now our redemption is shewed by leaving sin, 1 Pet. i. 18; for we are redeemed from our vain conversation. And here consider and eschew the ordinary abuse of the time set apart to celebrate the memory of our Saviour’s nativity; how unworthy it is of the Lord’s coming, nay, clean contrary, see 1 John iii. 8; and 1 Pet. iv. 3. Our adoption comes hence, Gal. iv. 5. Now such as God takes to be his sons should live in obedience unto him, 1 Pet. i. 14, &c.; 2 Cor. vii. 1, 2. Our justification is by faith, which purifies the heart, Acts xv. 9, and brings peace with God, Rom. v. 1. Our sanctification is by the Spirit, which reneweth the soul into the graces of God’s image, Gal. v. 22.

For comfort: first, Against temptation; for God’s work is perfect, Deut. xxxii. 4, and in him we are complete, Col. i. 10, and therefore neither need to despair through guilt of sin nor want of righteousness.

Secondly, Against persecution. Consider, 2 Tim. ii. 12, ‘If we suffer, we shall also reign with him;’ Acts xviii. 9, 10, ‘Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace. For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee.’ And do as they did, Dan. iii. 16, 17, Say, ‘We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us.’ Remember, Rom. viii. 18, ‘The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall

be revealed in us ;' 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

The second thing here to be considered is purposely intended.

That righteousness doth ever accompany Christ Jesus where he brings salvation ; it goes before him, and he sets her steps in the way that he walks, Isa. ix. 7. He sits upon the throne of David, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice for ever : Isa. xi. 4, 5, 'With righteousness shall he judge the poor. Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins ;' Heb. i. 8, 'A sceptre of righteousness is his sceptre ;' Ps. xcvi. 10, 13, 'He shall judge the world righteously, with righteousness ;' therefore he tells John the Baptist, 'Let it be so now, for so it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness,' Mat. iii. 15, that is, to do everything required of us by God.

The reason hereof is twofold : first, Because Christ is Jehovah, true and very God, and so must needs be ever attended with righteousness, which is an essential and inseparable property of the true God : Ps. cxlv. 17, 'The Lord is righteous in all his ways ;' Rom. iii. 4, 5, 'Is God unrighteous ? God forbid.'

Secondly, Christ as mediator, God-man, is called of God the Father in righteousness, Isa. xlii. 6 ; and he is faithful unto him that called him, Heb. iii. 2, being, even in his manhood, filled with the gifts and graces of the Spirit above measure, Isa. xlii. : 1 John iii. 34.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways : first, That the ordinances of religion, which are instituted by Christ in his church, and the observance thereof required both of ministers and people, be all most just and righteous. When Moses, the servant of the Lord, had delivered to the Jews laws and ordinances from the Lord, he commends them all for righteous, and thereupon presseth the people to conscionable obedience, saying, 'What nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before thee this day ? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget,' &c., Deut. iv. 8, 9. Why, then,

may we not say the same of the ordinances of Christ ? who is faithful as Moses in all the house of God, and herein above Moses, a servant, that he is a son over his own house, Heb. iii. 2, 3, 6. Now Christ's ordinances for salvation are the ministry of the word, the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, with church discipline : see Mat. xxviii. 18-20, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ;' there he enjoineth the preaching of the word and baptism. The Lord's supper, or holy communion, he had instituted a little before his passion, Mat. xxvi. 26, &c. And the exercise of public prayers, to sanctify God's ordinances in obtaining blessings, and removing judgments, and praising God, he appointed himself, Mat. xviii. 19, 20 ; John xvi. 23, 24 ; Mat. vii. 7 ; and by his apostles, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, 'I will that prayers and supplications, &c., be made for all men.' For discipline, see Mat. xviii. 15, &c.

And for the right and reverent use of these he gave gifts unto men by his Spirit, some to be prophets, some apostles for the planting of the church, others to be pastors and teachers for the going on of that building, the foundation whereof is Jesus Christ, see Eph. iv. 8, 9, 11, 12 : 1 Cor. xii. 28. These are Christ's ordinances, and the observance hereof, both by ministers and people, is plainly required. For ministers, see 1 Cor. iv. 2. 'Moreover, it is required of the disposers, or stewards, that a man be found faithful ;' which faithfulness stands in giving unto every one his portion in due season, Luke xii. 42, 43, 46,—that is, judgments to the wicked, and mercies to the godly, after instruction : see 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26, and iv. 1, 2, for instruction ; for rebuke, 1 Tim. iv. 20, with Ps. xi. 6, and lxxv. 8 ; and for comforting the godly, see Isa. xl. 1, 2 ; Col. iv. 8 ; 1 Thes. v. 14, 'Warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded ;' and for necessity, 1 Cor. ix. 16. Then for the people, the necessity of their subjection and observance is plain, Luke x. 10, 13, 16, with Prov. xiii. 13, 'Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed ;' and chap. xxviii. 7, 'He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abominable.' The charge of Christ in all his epistles to the seven



churches of Asia, that he that hath an ear to hear must hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, Rev. ii. 7, &c., shews the same; besides the allurements from benefits thereby, as Isa. lv. 3, 'Hear, and your soul shall live;' Rom. x. 17, 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;' it is the word of his grace, Acts x. 32. And for the sacraments, the legal commination for neglect or contempt of circumcision, Gen. xvii. 14, and of the passover, Exod. xii. 24, with Num. ix. 13, shews in equity the necessity of due partaking of the evangelical sacraments. And for prayer, the neglect thereof is the brand of the atheist, Ps. xiv. 1, 4; and a sin liable to a grievous curse, Ps. lxxix. 6, 'Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.' And he that shall refuse subjection to the censure of the church, must be cast out as a heathen, Mat. xviii. 17; the weight of their censure, following God's word, see ver. 18, 'Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' 1 Cor. v. 3-5, 'I have judged already, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.'

Secondly, See here also, that the difference observed by Christ Jesus as well about the means of grace, denying it some and vouchsafing it to others, at least for a time; as Mat. x. 5, 6, 'Go not into the way of the Gentiles; and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' And, Acts xvi. 6, they were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia; but, vers. 9, 10, they endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering, that the Lord had called them to preach the gospel there; as also for the gift of grace itself to some, and the denial of it to others, amongst whom the means is sent: as we may see, Mat. xiii. 11, 'It is given to

you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.' See, I say, that in both these is divine justice; for they are the ways of Christ, and therefore just.

For admonition two ways: first, To the wicked, that they consider their fearful and dangerous state wherein they stand, being indeed enemies to righteousness, both in the affections of their hearts and the actions of their lives; as Paul told Elymas, Acts xiii. 10, 'Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness.' Now if Christ's ways be righteous ways, which they oppose, then will it be a righteous thing with God to judge them, as he threateneth: 1 Cor. vi. 9, 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?' They must know, that if in this life they do not by true repentance prevent it, hereafter under God's severe judgments they shall, with Pharaoh, when it is too late, acknowledge the righteousness thereof: Exod. ix. 27, 'I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous; and my people are wicked.'

Secondly, To the godly, that they give evidence of their approbation of the righteousness of Christ's ordinances, and thereon so subject themselves thereto, that they approve themselves wise virgins who have the oil of grace in the vessels of their hearts, Mat. xxv. 4, and good and faithful servants, who have well improved their master's talents, ver. 16, 17, with 20, 23, moved thereto by the fearful state of the foolish virgins, ver. 8, 9, and the idle servant, ver. 24, &c.

For comfort, this makes greatly to all those that suffer persecution for righteousness' sake; for as God is righteous in this kind of trial and correction upon his children,—Ps. cxix. 75, 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in very faithfulness hast afflicted me,'—so he will approve himself righteous in a happy deliverance. 'Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you that are troubled, rest with us,' 2 Thes. i. 6, 7.

# THE GREAT CHARTER OF THE CHURCH;

OR,

## AN EXPOSITION OF PSALM LXXXVII.

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**PSALM LXXXVII.** *A psalm or song for the sons of Korah.*

Ver. 1. *His foundation is in the holy mountains, &c.*

In this psalm the Holy Ghost doth plainly set out sundry privileges and prerogatives of God's church, wherein she hath surpassing advancement above all other places, states, and conditions of the people in the world beside.

Whether it were penned after the return of the people from the captivity of Babylon, for their encouragement, being but very few, and for their comfort, being under great contempt from enemies round about them, (as some godly and learned interpreters do think,) is not set down, and so not certain. Yet sure it is, this psalm was penned for the comfort and encouragement of the godly, in such times as the church is in danger, misery, and calamity, by the consideration of her founder, which is the Lord Jehovah, ver. 1; of his special affection towards her, ver. 2; of the glorious things which are spoken of her, ver. 3; as great increase and enlargement by the calling and conversion of foreign nations, ver. 4; great honour by the regeneration or effectual calling of many in her, and great safety by the Lord's own establishment of her, ver. 5; and great renown by enrolling her true members in his book, ver. 6. Lastly, Joy and comfort unspeakable, by the cheerful service of God, and the well-springs or fountains

of saving graces in her, ver. 7. Before this psalm is this title: 'A psalm or song for the sons of Korah.' Which title shews two things: the use of it in God's service, and the parties by whom it should be used.

For the use, it is a psalm or song, or a psalm and song,—that is, a holy hymn, which was both to be played on their musical instruments and to be sung with voice together. And here the musical instruments were to lead the voice, as Ps. lxxvii. 1, and lxxviii. 1. Sometime the voice was to lead the instruments, as Ps. xlvi. 1, a song or psalm.

Hereon we need not long insist, because this kind of singing was peculiar to the tabernacle and temple, and so ended in Christ, as Heb. vii. 11, with 19, and Col. ii. 17.

Yet thus much it sheweth, that God required joy and gladness in his service, therefore would he have instruments of joy used in his service, which David prepared, 1 Chron. xxiii. 5, and xxv. 1. And he bids all his people to rejoice in their feasts, Deut. xvi. 11, 14, which feasts did represent the lives of Christians. And in evangelical worship he requires 'making melody to the Lord in their hearts,' Eph. v. 19.

The reason is great: for in God's service we have society with God, which is a just cause of exceeding joy. Herein God vouchsafeth us evidence of his special favour, and if we shall take no delight there-

in it argues fearful contempt, which God cannot endure without revenge: as Dent. xxviii. 47, 48, 'Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore thou shalt serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee;' whereto add Amos viii. 5, 11.

This should move us to stir up in our hearts, and to express in our behaviours, this spiritual joy in God's service.

To this end we have need of the Spirit to sanctify us, which will make us to rejoice in God's word, as one that fineth a great spoil, Ps. cxix. 162; and conceiving it to be the food of our souls, let us labour to hunger and thirst after it, and then with Job shall we esteem it above our appointed food, Job xxiii. 12. And when we know God to be our God, and the fountain of blessings to us, we shall come before him with gladness in prayer, Ps. c. 2; 'And our mouth shall praise him with joyful lips,' Ps. lxxiii. 5.

The second thing to be noted in the dedication is the parties by whom it is to be used: the sons of Korah.

These sons of Korah were the posterity of that rebellious Levite, who, with Dathan and Abiram, rebelled against Moses and Aaron, Num. xvi., which Korah was consumed with fire, ver. 35, compared with 17. Howbeit there were of his sons that died not, chap. xxvi. 11; departing, as it seemeth, from their father's tent, as all were commanded, chap. xvi. 24, 25. And of these is numbered a family of the Korathites, chap. xxvi. 58; of whom came Samuel the prophet, and Heman his nephew, 1 Chron. vi. 33, a great singer, chap. xxv. 4, 5.

Here then we may observe that the sons—that is, the posterity of wicked and rebellious Korah—have an honourable place in God's sacred and solemn service; for to them sundry of David's psalms are commended, as Ps. xlii., xlv., xlv., xlv., &c., which is no small honour.

No doubt David saw them, being by place and birth Levites, to be faithful and diligent in their place, and thus renowns them to all posterity, that

he composeth special psalms for their ministry in the solemn service of God.

*Use* 1. Here see the verifying of God's word for the comfort of all godly children, that 'the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father,' Ezek. xviii. 14, 17, 20, if he see his father's sins and turn from them.

*Object* 1. But 'the Lord is a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children,' Exod. xx. 5.

*Ans.* That is, inquiring for the sin of the fathers among the children, and if he find it there, then pays he them home.

*Object* 2. Achan's sons and daughters are stoned and burned for their father's sacrilege, Joshua vii. 24, 25; and Dathan's and Abiram's little children are swallowed up, Num. xvi. 27.

*Ans.* For aught we know, they might be of years of discretion, and privy to their fathers' stealth.

When little ones die in the punishment of their father's sin, God lays not the punishment of the father's sin upon the children; but, to make the father's sin more odious, doth then bring upon the children the fruit of their own original corruption, which is death determined upon all flesh, as appears, Gen. ii. 17, compared with Rom. v. 12. As a creditor, that hath both the father and the son debtors unto him, may, upon the father's provocation, lay the forfeiture upon both, being both in his danger.

*Use* 2. Secondly, Here is special encouragement to the children of wicked parents, to become godly and faithful in their places. In some sense they are the sons of strangers; for 'the wicked are estranged from the womb,' Ps. lviii. 3; yet if they leave their father's sins, and become faithful to the Lord, here is comfort for them, in the honour of Korah's posterity: see Isa. lvi. 3, 6, 7. 'Let not the son of the stranger, that joineth himself to the Lord, say, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people. For the sons of the stranger, that joined themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, &c.; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer,' &c. 'For them that honour me I will honour,' saith the Lord, 1 Sam. ii. 30.

Thus much for the title; the psalm itself followeth.

Ver. 1. *His foundation is in the holy mountains.*

That is, God founded his holy city and sanctuary among the holy mountains of Judea, even on mount Moriah, 2 Chron. iii. 1, and mount Zion, Ps. xlviii. 2. For the relative here used hath the Lord, named in the next verse, for his antecedent, to which it is most fitly and properly referred, according to our translation, wherewith, among variety of references by interpreters, I rest best satisfied.

In the words so understood, two things are contained: first, The author and founder of the church, shadowed out by the holy city and sanctuary at Jerusalem; secondly, The seat thereof.

For the first; the true church, typified by the holy city and temple at Jerusalem, is a spiritual building of God's own founding and making. Here it is called his foundation. And in regard of him founding it, it is called his tabernacle, Rev. xxi. 3; and the holy city coming down from heaven, ver. 2; Jerusalem from above, Gal. iv. 26. This is that city, in the glory of it, which the patriarchs sought, whose builder and maker is God, Heb. xi. 10.

This is most plain if we consider, 1. The foundation, Christ Jesus. For 'other foundation can no man lay,' saith St Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 11, and God himself saith he layeth this: Isa. xxviii. 16, 'Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.' 2. The upper building, Christians: 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5, 'To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house.' 3. The builders, both efficient and instrumental, God and his ministers: 1 Cor. iii. 9, 'For we are labourers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.'

The reason is, the praise of the glory of his grace among his elect and chosen people. For here God sets his name, Deut. xiv. 24, and will be glorified in his people, Isa. xlix. 3.

This serves for instruction, concerning the stability of the church, not only in the whole, as God's building, against which the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail, Mat. xvi. 18, but in every true member of it, as God's workmanship in Christ Jesus, Eph.

ii. 10; for it is God that establisheth us in Christ, 2 Cor. i. 21. Christ, as a shepherd, will not lose one sheep. 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand,' John x. 27, 28. 'While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition,' John xvii. 12. He being their head, and they being his members, 1 Cor. xii. 27, will he suffer them to be pulled away? Nay, he is the saviour of his body, Eph. v. 23.

It serves for admonition likewise: first, For ministers in regard of their doctrine, whereby they are workers together with God, 1 Cor. iii. 9, compared with 2 Cor. vi. 1. They must not be ignorant nor negligent, but wise and faithful, in this great work of spiritual building. The foundation being laid, which is Jesus Christ, they must take heed what they build thereupon; for every man's work shall be made manifest, the day shall declare it of what sort it is, 1 Cor. iii. 10, &c.

Secondly, For God's people. Every one must suffer himself to be wrought upon in the ministry of the word, to be hewn and squared and fitted to lie upon Christ; which we then are, when we be brought to leave sin by true repentance, to live in Christ by true faith, and to walk in new obedience in the course of our lives, thereby testifying the truth of our faith and repentance. Therefore, with St Paul, Heb. xiii. 22. 'I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation.'

The second thing to be here observed is, The seat of God's building, where he lays the foundation of his holy city and temple,—namely, in the holy mountains, which may be understood generally of the land of Canaan, which was a mountainous country, Deut. xi. 11; God's inheritance chosen for his own people, Ps. xcvi. 1, compared with xlvii. 4; called his holy border, Ps. lxxviii. 54; that land which he bordered out for his people, Num. xxxiv. 3. &c.; or more particularly of the mountains Zion and Moriah, whereon God by his special providence caused Jerusalem his holy city, and the temple his holy sanctuary, to be seated and built.

And these mountains are called holy, not for any

holiness or sanctity inherent in the soil or ground, but, first, From God's presence, who chose chief hills for his seat to dwell in, as Ps. lxxviii. 16, lxxiv. 2, and exxxii. 13; Isa. viii. 18; and Zech. viii. 3, 'Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain.' Secondly, From that holy use and employment whereto he put these mountains, for hereon was built the holy city, Dan. ix. 16, and the holy sanctuary or temple, 2 Chron. iii. 1; Ps. lxxviii. 68, 69.

Mark, then, God builds Jerusalem the holy city, and the temple his holy sanctuary, on the holy mountains Zion and Moriah; the places before quoted shew it plainly, with Ps. exxii. 1, &c.

The reason hereof is twofold: first, To let his people know that their God, with whom they enter covenant, is a most holy God: for the very place of his spiritual abode, and of his holy solemn service, is a holy place: Ps. xcix. 9, 'Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy.' Joshua xxiv. 19, 'Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God.'

Secondly, To prefigure and shew forth in plain type the inseparable property of God's true church,—namely, that it is holy and sanctified. As the holy temple was built upon the holy hill Moriah, so is God's church built upon Christ Jesus,—all holy. Christ Jesus as the foundation and fountain, that holy thing, Luke i. 35; 'The Holy One of God.' Mark i. 24. Christians, through his redemption and the sanctification of the Spirit, 'holy ones.' Eph. v. 25-27, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or blemish.' Hence is that of the apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.' And 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17, 'What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be

my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.' And 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9, 'Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood; a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.'

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, it plainly discovers the fearful estate of all profane and wicked persons, as idolaters, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, drunkards, adulterers, and the like; for though they have been baptized, and do come to the Lord's service, yea, to his holy table, yet certainly they are no true and lively members of the church, but, like Ham in Noah's ark, Gen. ix. 18, 25, an accursed person in a godly family; like chaff among the corn on the barn-floor, Mat. iii. 12; like tares among the wheat in the field, Mat. xiii. 38; like dross among the good fish in the net, Mat. xiii. 47-49; like Simon Magus, though baptized, yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, Acts viii. 13, 23. For every true member of the church must needs have fellowship with Christ Jesus, the true foundation, being built upon him. But 'shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee?' Ps. lxxxiv. 20. 'What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?' 2 Cor. vi. 14-16; 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth,' 1 John i. 6.

For admonition, a most effectual motive unto holiness, as well to get it into our hearts, as also to express the truth of it in our lives. This duty is commanded, Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;' and 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' Now, though the worker of this holiness be God alone, by his Spirit—for 'who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' Job xiv. 4—yet ordinarily he doth it in means; wherein God

requireth that natural men should exercise themselves. For want hereof he complaineth of the Jews, that therein he would have gathered them, as a hen doth her chicken under her wings, but they would not, Mat. xxiii. 37. They would not come to him that they might have life, John v. 40. Therefore he saith, 'The queen of the south shall rise up in judgment against this generation, and shall condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here,' Mat. xii. 42.

God's means for holiness enjoined to man is twofold—the word and prayer. The word is the seed, even the immortal seed of our new birth, wherein corruption is abolished and grace renewed, 1 Pet. i. 23; John xvii. 17. And prayer obtains the Spirit, Luke xi. 13, which is the author of holiness in the hearts of God's children, 1 Pet. i. 22; whereupon David prays to 'be washed thoroughly, to be purged and washed; to have a clean heart created, and a right spirit renewed in him,' Ps. li. 2, 7, 8.

Yet every kind of exercise in these ordinances doth not entitle unto holiness, but such as is joined with reformation of life, Prov. i. 23; with true earnest desire after holiness, Isa. li. 1; with conscientious endeavour of obedience to that we know, Acts v. 32; in all which we must wait upon the Lord for that we do desire, and not limit him either for time or measure, as Col. iv. 2, 'Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.' And then, if we wait patiently, God will hear, as Ps. xl. 1, 'I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.'

The careful expressing of holiness in life must be in all manner of conversation; 'as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation,' 1 Pet. i. 15. 'Seeing then all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' 2 Pet. iii. 11—that is, as well in the duties of our civil callings as in the exercises of religion, else we have show of godliness, but deny the power of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5.

For comfort, this makes greatly to all that he truly godly living in the church, for they are living stones, surely built upon Christ Jesus, the tried foundation; they are pillars in the house of the Lord, and shall go no more out, Rev. iii. 13.

Now the truth of our piety and holiness must be expressed, according to Christ's direction, Luke vi. 47, 48, to come, and hear, and do; so shall our building stand against all assaults, and blasts of temptations from the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Ver. 2. *The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.*

A second evidence of the church's happiness, in being the chief object of God's special love, having a greater part and portion therein than any other state or condition of men in the world beside; which indeed was the true ground and cause of the former benefit, and of all other that followed.

For the better understanding whereof we must know that there is a double trope in the words: first, The gates of Zion, part of the building of the city upon mount Zion, are put for the whole city, as it was a type of God's church in Christ, who, as mediator, here began the settled building and government of it, as Ps. ii. 6, compared with Luke i. 32, 33.

Secondly, Jacob is here put for his posterity, the whole twelve tribes who inhabited all the land of Canaan; as if he would have said, The Lord indeed bears a good affection to the whole land of Canaan, where his people dwell, as Deut. xi. 12, 'A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it;' but above all the places thereof he bears a good affection towards mount Zion, whereon his holy city is built, which is the type and beginning of his true church in Christ, visibly represented in a settled choice place.

In the words thus conceived note this point, that God loves his church above all other states and conditions of men in the world whatsoever: Mal. i. 1-3, 'The word of the Lord to Israel, (that is, the posterity of Jacob, the church in those days.) I have loved you, saith the Lord, (and that more than others;) for was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob and hated Esau,' which, in the most mild and favourable interpretation, taking hatred for less love, as Gen. xxix. 30, 31, proveth the point in hand, that God loves his church above all other states and conditions of men in the world, John xiii. 1, 'Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.' Eph. v. 25,

'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved his Church.' Christ Jesus in love to his church makes himself a pattern to husbands to love their wives. Now we know every husband should love his own wife more than any other woman in the world, and therefore we need not to doubt but Christ doth so to his church.

This will yet more plainly appear by these three things :

First, God's delivery vouchsafed to his church from evils.

Secondly, His advancement of her to special estate of happiness.

Thirdly ; the means of both, which is Jesus Christ given unto her.

For the first, The greatness of God's love in his delivery of his church will plainly appear by that which is said thereof, both in general and in particular. In general: 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all,' Ps. xxxiv. 19. 'He visiteth and redeemeth his people, and delivereth them out of the hands of all their enemies,' Luke i. 68, 74. In particular, God's church in herself is liable to temporal evils in this world, and to evils eternal in the world to come : for they were by nature the children of wrath, even as others, Eph. ii. 3.

Now from eternal evils God gives to his church absolute and perfect deliverance. 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,' Rom. viii. 1 ; 'on them the second death hath no power,' Rev. xx. 6. But it is not so with others that be out of the church ; to them it will be said, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,' Mat. xxv. 41.

And for deliverance from temporal evils in this world, whether corporal or spiritual, God's church hath a great prerogative above others, though not in absolute freedom from them ; for 'we must, through many tribulations, enter into the kingdom of God,' Acts xiv. 22 ; and the church of God is greatly afflicted when all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest, Zech. i. 11, 12. Yet in her sufferings the church of God hath a great measure of deliverance which the world doth ever want—namely, from the curse of God, which ever accompanieth temporal evils upon the men of the world, as Zech. v. 3.

For Christ hath redeemed his church from the curse of the law, Gal. iii. 13, and the evils that lie upon them are corrections for sin. 'When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world,' 1 Cor. xi. 32 ; or trials of grace, as James i. 2, 3, 'My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations ; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.' 1 Pet. i. 6, 7, 'Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations : that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.' Job ii. 3, 'The Lord said to Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil ? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest me against him, to destroy him without cause.'

For the second.

God's advancement of his church to a special estate of happiness is twofold : partly in this world, and principally in the world to come. In this world, sometime with outward peace and plenty, to the admiration of the world, as in the days of Solomon, 1 Kings x. 21, &c. And though many times the church of God hath a small portion in temporal blessings, for their felicity is not in this life:—'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable,' 1 Cor. xv. 19;—yet hath she always in Christ Jesus true right unto all temporal blessings, for Christ is Lord of all, Mat. xxviii. 18 ; and in him 'all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come,' 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. She hath also a sanctified use of what she enjoys, and sweet content therein, whether her portion be small or great: 'I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content ; I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound : everywhere in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need,' Phil. iv. 11, 12 ; living under that special providence whereby she is preserved night and day, Isa. xxxvii. 3. But in spiritual blessings is her special advancement above the world,

'Blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,' Eph. i. 3. '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,' 1 Cor. ii. 9. As in effectual calling to the state of grace, wherein they have spiritual society with God in Christ, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple,' Ps. lxxv. 4; being married unto him, 'For thy Maker is thine husband,' Isa. liv. 5. 'And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies; I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord,' Hosea ii. 19, 20; so Ps. xlv., and Canticles. In justification from the guilt of sin, 'Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin,' Rom. iv. 7, 8. In adoption to the honour and state of sons and daughters: 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God,' 1 John iii. 1. In sanctification, to the abolishing of corruption in regard of dominion, and the renewing of the soul in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, Eph. iv. 21-24. In which estate they are made kings and priests unto God, Rev. i. 5, 6; 'Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power,' Col. i. 11; and established in Christ, and on Christ, so as the gates of hell shall not prevail against them, Mat. xvi. 18; see 2 Cor. i. 2, &c.

In the world to come, God's advancement of his church is perfect unto all fulness of joy, and height of honour for evermore.

Then they receive the kingdom prepared for them, Mat. xxv. 34, and wear the crown of righteousness laid up for them, 2 Tim. iv. 8. Now they have on them white robes of perfect holiness, and palms in their hands, of full conquest over all enemies, Rev. vii. 9. Now they are in God's presence, where is fulness of joy, and at his right hand, where are pleasures for evermore, Ps. xvi. 11. They enjoy that

glory wherewith the afflictions of this present time are not worthy to be compared, Rom. viii. 18; the hope wherewith will sustain the soul in the greatest distress, as 2 Cor. iv. 14, 16, 17. 'Knowing that he which raised up Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' So as, indeed, we may say of these glorious joys, as the Queen of Sheba said of Solomon's wisdom, 1 Kings x. 7, 'The one half thereof was not shewed unto me.'

Thirdly, The greatness of God's love to his church doth appear in the means of both the former; which is the gift of Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, to become man, and to die for their sins, and to rise again for their justification, Rom. iv. 25. He redeemeth his church from the curse of the law, by becoming himself a curse for them, Gal. iii. 13. 'He delivereth them from the wrath to come,' 1 Thes. i. 10. And hereupon, by way of excellence, is called the 'deliverer and redeemer,' Rom. xi. 26, out of Isa. lix. 20, where the same word is used which Job hath, calling Christ his redeemer, chap. xix. 25. It is he also that doth exalt and advance his church to salvation and glory: 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life,' John x. 27, 28; 'For God hath not appointed us to wrath; but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,' 1 Thes. v. 9.

The reason hereof is not anything in the church, existent or foreseen, as a meritorious or moving cause; for God loves her freely, Hosea xiv. 4. Her loathsome state in corruption shews it plainly, when the first evidence thereof is given: 'When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. Thy time was as the time of love,' Ezek. xvi. 6, 8. Yet when the church hath being, as it is built upon Christ Jesus, and is indued with the Spirit, and beautified with the graces thereof, even for all these doth God's love actually increase towards his church, to the daily provocation of her love to him again, with praise and thanks, and more conscionable obedience for his glory, as Deut. x. 12, &c.



This serves for instruction, for admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, It shews what a blessed thing it is to be a true member of God's church; for all such have true part and portion in God's special love, as is before shewed.

Now this is the fountain of all blessings, even of the blessing of blessings, the gift of the Son of God: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,' John iii. 16. With whom come all other good things: '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?' Rom. viii. 32. We know that love is kind or bountiful, 1 Cor. xiii. 4; and hence we count kings' favourites happy, as being near and dear to those that are so able to enrich and honour them in the world, as Esther vi. 6, &c. How happy then are they that are favourites to the King of kings, the eternal, omnipotent Lord of all? See Ps. cxlviii. 3, &c., 'Put not your trust in princes,' &c. 'Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help; whose hope is in the Lord his God,' &c. 'Happy is the people that is in such a case: yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord,' Ps. cxlv. 15. 'For who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high?' &c. Ps. cxlii. 15.

Secondly, It shews one reason of the manifold and great troubles and afflictions of God's church and children here on earth, when the wicked world is at ease and rest, Zech. i. 11, 12; a case that troubled the prophets of God. 'As for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked,' Ps. lxxiii. 2, 3. 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments; wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root; they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit; thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins,' Jer. xii. 1, 2. And so may easily make weak Christians to stagger, as Judges vi. 13, 'If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?' It is true, that the sins of

God's church and children lay the foundation of these evils: for affliction follows sinners, as Jer. ix. 12, &c., 'Who is the wise man, that may understand this? and who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth and is burnt up like a wilderness, that none passeth through? And the Lord said, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein,' &c. Sin brings in death itself, and all evils that fore-run or accompany the same.<sup>1</sup> '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. v. 12. Yet God's dear and fatherly love to his church comes in as a moving cause of the church's afflictions, that thereby he may bring them to repentance, and to escape condemnation; see Rev. iii. 19, 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.' 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth,' Heb. xii. 16. 'For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world,' 1 Cor. xi. 30, 32. Herein it is with our heavenly Father, as Solomon saith of earthly parents, Prov. xiii. 24, 'He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.' Hence David pronounceth them blessed whom the Lord correcteth, Ps. xciv. 12; and acknowledgeth it was good for him, and that God did it of very faithfulness, Ps. cxix. 67, 71, 75, 'Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word,' &c.

This we are to note, to prevent rash judgment against ourselves and others under the cross; whereto how apt we are against ourselves, see Isa. xlix. 14, 'Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.' Against others, Isa. liii. 3, 12, 'He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. He was numbered with the transgressors.'

For admonition two ways: first, To give all diligence to become true members of the church, that so we may have part in God's special love,

<sup>1</sup> ἁπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας; ἁρῆ, damnum.

wherein stands true happiness. And hereto two things are required: first, That we know the true church; and secondly, That we be not only in it, but of it.

For the first, Where the true church of God is, what people professing religion be God's true church, is a great question, of large extent, and much disputed between protestants and papists. For our direction and resolution, briefly let us learn this, that the true church is Christ's mystical body: Eph. i. 22, 23, 'Gave him (that is, Christ) to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body.' That spiritual building which consists of spiritual living stones, built upon the foundation, Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5-7; Mat. xvi. 18; 1 Cor. iii. 9; that is, such professors of the faith of the gospel as by the work of the Spirit are indued with true faith, and adorn their profession with new obedience. Now then, those that profess religion, and have communion and fellowship with Christ, through the work of the Spirit in grace, undoubtedly are true members of Christ's church; but those that be evidenced to want fellowship with Christ through faith, are no church of God, nor true members thereof. Now they of the church of Rome are cut off from his fellowship by their idolatry: Col. ii. 18, 19, 'Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the head,' &c.

By their opinion of justification by works: 'Christ is become of none effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace,' Gal. v. 4, by making the pope the head of the church; for he is antichrist, and those that so hold are antichristian. The true church hath not two heads.

The way to become true members of Christ's church, for sure title to God's special love, is humbly and reverently to receive the word of the covenant, and conscientiously to yield obedience thereunto, as Deut. xxxiii. 3; Mark xvi. 26. The right receiving is by faith, 1 Pet. ii. 7. And the truth thereof must be testified by obedience; 'For true faith worketh by love,' Gal. v. 6. 'And this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments,' 1 John v. 3.

Secondly, The wicked of the world must hereby be admonished to beware of wronging God's children; for God, that loves them above others, will require and requite it, Ps. x. 14; as Ps. cv. 14, 15, 'He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.' 'He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye,' Zech. ii. 8. Therefore it will be good to regard and follow the counsel of Gamaliel, Acts v. 38, 'Refrain from these men, and let them alone; lest we be found fighters against God,' and it be said to us, as it was unto Paul, chap ix. 4, 5, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' &c.

For consolation, it makes greatly to every true member of God's church in any distress; for certainly they have a special part and portion in God's love, from which no afflictions can separate them: see Rom. viii. 35, 37-39, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us,' &c. 'Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end,' John xiii. 1. Therefore, even in affliction they may say, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me,' Micah vii. 8.

*Ver. 3. Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God.*

A third thing setting out the happiness of the church, that though her present outward state be not always comfortable and glorious, yet even then her future hopes upon divine prophecies and promises are great and excellent.

In the words note two things: first, The description of the place.

Secondly, The declaration of her happiness in the ground of her hopes.

For the first; the place here spoken of is Jerusalem, thus described, 'Thou city of God;' so called because of God's sanctuary here seated on mount Zion, which place God chose and desired for his habitation, saying, 'This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it,' Ps. cxxxii. 13,

14. Whereupon in the New Testament it is called 'the city of the great King,' Mat. v. 35. Now the earthly Jerusalem here spoken of must be understood to denote the true church of God in all ages, as being in the prophet's time, when this psalm was penned, both the chief seat and true type thereof, so as for us the point here contained is this, The true church of God is God's own city; hence it is called 'Jerusalem from above,' Gal. iv. 26. The heavenly Jerusalem, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, the great city, the holy Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 2, 10.

The reason hereof is God's free grace and favour, choosing his church in Christ to be his own by covenant, even his house, Heb. iii. 6; 1 Tim. iii. 15; his temple, so as he will dwell in them, and walk in them, 2 Cor. vi. 16; and so his city, where the tabernacle of God is with men, Rev. xxi. 3.

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, to our great comfort, that God certainly will defend his church against all enemies; for so much will every king do for his chief city, that is the chamber of his kingdom, and every householder for his own habitation; as Mat. xxiv. 43. 'If the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would have come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.' See God's promise and performance for Jerusalem while it remained the seat of his sanctuary: Isa. xxxvii. 35. 'I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.' Hereupon the people of God say, 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early,' Ps. xlv. 1, &c. 'God is known in her palaces for a refuge,' Ps. xlviii. 3. And for the true church herself in all ages: 'Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,' Mat. xvi. 18. 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise

against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn,' Isa. liv. 17.

For admonition it serves two ways: first, As we desire true safety and salvation eternal, so to join ourselves truly to God's church; 'For upon mount Zion shall be deliverance,' Obad. xvii. This is as Noah's ark, into which all must come that look to be saved from the deluge of damnation, Heb. xi. 7. Therefore it is said that God 'added to his church daily such as should be saved,' Acts ii. 47. Now the way into Christ's church is by true repentance, and faith in Christ Jesus, as Acts ii. 38, 41. 'Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and 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. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.'

Secondly, When we do profess the truth of Christ we must walk worthy of this holy place, by a continual daily strife and endeavour after sanctification, testified in new obedience. Hereinto none do enter or continue that are unholy or profane: '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,' Rev. xxi. 27. This is God's holy city, not only in regard of the owner, God himself, but of all the free denizens, the true inhabitants thereof. God's people are a holy nation, 1 Pet. ii. 9; and the Lord saith, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy,' Lev. xi. 44, 45; even holy in abstaining from outward pollution by unclean creatures. The same duty is enjoined upon the prohibiting of idolatry and witchcrafts, chap. xx. 7. So that whether the sin be small or great we must abstain from it, because we have a holy God, and live in a holy place, which is his church: as we say in the confession of our faith, 'I believe the holy catholic church.' 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place?' He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart,' &c., Ps. xxiv. 3, 4. Hence was the use of the paddle in the camp to cover their excrements, because God walked in the midst of the camp, Deut. xxxiii. 13, 14.

The second thing to be noted here is the declaration of the church's happiness, in the sure ground of

her certain hopes of her future blessings,—namely, God's gracious promises of glorious things to be done unto her, every one whereof is mentioned in God's word, as the phrase in the original doth imply, joining a participle of the singular number to a noun of the plural, which some render thus: Glorious things is spoken of thee, meaning that every one of them concerning the church's happiness is particularly mentioned in God's word.

Mark, then, that God in his word doth plainly and particularly mention exceeding glorious things belonging to the church, touching her future happiness. These do concern partly her happy deliverance from evils, for 'God shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities,' Ps. cxxx. 8; 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned,' &c., Isa. xliii. 2, &c.

But chiefly her fruition of blessings, even in this world, under the kingdom of Christ, called the accepted time and day of salvation, 2 Cor. vi. 2; the time of reformation, Heb. ix. 10. Glorious things indeed were spoken of these times, as 1 Cor. ii. 9, '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:' 1 Pet. i. 12, see some particulars, which are for quality admirable, and for number almost innumerable. 'Now the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold,' Isa. xxx. 26, meaning that there shall be a wonderful increase of knowledge and of the comforts of grace. 'Now kings shall be her nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers,' &c., Isa. xlix. 23; add hereunto Isa. liv. 1-3, 11-13; lx. 1, 2; lxii. 1, 2; lxxv. 17, 18; and lxxvi. 11, 12; Rev. xxi. and xxii. And whatsoever shall be wanting to the church, or to any true member thereof in this world, shall be superabundantly supplied and recompensed in the world to come, as Rom. viii. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 53, 54; 2 Cor. iv. 14, 16, and v. 1, &c.; Phil. iii. 20, 21.

The ground and reason of this course of God's dealing in mentioning glorious things to belong to his church, is threefold:

First, To allure and draw natural men to join

themselves unto the church, that their part may be in the fruition of these glorious things, as Moses allured Jethro (called also Hobab) to go with them into the land of Canaan: Num. x. 12, 32, 'Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. And it shall be if thou go with us; yea, it shall be that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.'

Secondly, To encourage the true members of the church unto growth and perseverance in grace and obedience, for in these glorious things promised we may see the reward of religion, even the comforts of grace here and crown of glory hereafter, as Moses on Pisgah saw all the land of Canaan, Deut. xxxiv. 1, &c. Herewith the patriarchs were allured to follow the Lord, and Moses to leave the honour of Pharaoh's court, Heb. xi. 13, 24-26. This hastened St Paul to his holy endeavour for perfection in grace: Phil. iii. 13, 14, 'This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'

Thirdly, To comfort the godly under afflictions, which follow the sincere profession of the faith, and are as sharp and dangerous storms to passengers by sea. But in these glorious things promised we may cast anchor safely, and behold the quiet harbour of rest and safety. 'In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul,' Ps. xciv. 19. 'Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in mine affliction: for thy word hath quickened me,' Ps. cxix. 49, 50; see also Rom. viii. 18, with 2 Cor. iv. 14, 16; and 1 Pet. i. 5, 6.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, That the happiness of God's church and children must not be measured by their outward state in this world, which many times is not only very mean, but miserable, as the apostle shews, 1 Cor. xv. 19, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ Jesus, we are of all men most miserable.' Their happiness therefore must be measured by their present title to God's favour in Christ, through the covenant of grace, whereby

they have the Lord for their God, which is true happiness. Ps. cxliv. 15, 'Happy is that people, that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.' And by their certain title to future glory, wherein they greatly rejoice, though for a season they be in heaviness, 1 Pet. i. 6.

Secondly, See here what a profitable and comfortable thing it is to be much conversant in Scripture, which is the great charter of God's church, shewing all the glorious things whereto she hath right and interest in Christ Jesus. And indeed they are very great; for 'if God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' Rom. viii. 32. He is 'made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' 1 Cor. i. 30. Those gentlemen that fall wails in their minority take great delight to read or hear of their deeds and evidences, which shew what lordships, what demesnes and royalties, do belong unto them. Why should not we so delight in God's word? The godly have so done: Job xxiii. 12, 'I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.' 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.' Jer. xv. 16. 'How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.' Ps. cxix. 103. 'I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil,' Ps. cxix. 162.

For admonition two ways: first, That living in the church we make sure we have good right and title to these glorious things that are spoken of her. It is true, these days of grace under the gospel have accomplishment of them in good measure, as 2 Cor. vi. 2, 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' But yet our personal right must be measured by the truth of our faith: for these precious promises do belong to them that have obtained like precious faith, 2 Pet. i. 1, 4: We must therefore prove ourselves whether we be in the faith, 2 Cor. xiii. 5; which is best known by the work of the word, 2 Thes. ii. 13, in the sanctification of the heart, Acts xv. 9, and reformation of the life, Acts xix. 18, 19.

Secondly, That we walk worthy of the Lord and of his glorious promises in the profession of our faith. The way is shewed upon this ground: 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.' And Col. i. 10, &c., 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God,' &c.

For comfort, this makes greatly to every true member of the church in any misery. They must call to remembrance these precious promises of future glory: and so though the outward man perish, yet the inward man will be renewed daily, 2 Cor. iv. 14, 19. Thus have the godly comforted themselves in all times, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.' Micah vii. 8. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolations also abound by Christ, 2 Cor. i. 5. 'For if we suffer, we shall also reign with him,' 2 Tim. ii. 12. 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17. Hence it is said that Christ himself, 'for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame,' Heb. xii. 2. So saith St Peter, 'Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy,' 1 Pet. iv. 13.

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Ver. 4. *I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia: this man was born there.*

Here he comes to confirm the truth of that he had said in the former verse, touching the glorious things spoken of the church, by particular instance in the calling and conversion of many foreign nations, even of such as formerly had been cruel enemies of God's people.

For the better conceiving wherof we must search out two things: first, The countries or people here spoken of; secondly, How their calling or conversion to the church is expressed.

The countries here named, by which we must understand the people inhabiting them, are in a double rank: first, Rahab and Babylon. By Rahab we must understand not the harlot Rahab that received the spies, Joshua ii., as many of the ancient

fathers do, — viz., Jerome, Austin, Theodoret, Euthymius, Cassiodorus, and others: for, first, Her name in the original is written with a dense aspirate ה. (רהב) but this word is written with a mild aspirate ה. (רהב); secondly, The conjoined names do shew that by Rahab here is meant a nation or people, rather than one particular person; whereby we may see how injurious and prejudicial to truth it is to make the unanimous or general consent of fathers the right rule of interpreting the Scripture, whereto we should tie ourselves for the understanding of it, as the Council of Trent doth in the fourth session.

But by Rahab we must here understand Egypt, as in many other places it is certainly taken: 'Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain,' Ps. lxxxix. 10. 'Art thou it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?' Isa. li. 9; where Rahab is Egypt, and the dragon is Pharaoh the king thereof, as the verse following doth plainly intimate.

Why Egypt is called Rahab is very probable from some city so called, or rather, as I conceive, from her conceited strength wherein she did pride herself; whereto some think allusion is made, Isa. xxx. 7.

Babylon is the chief city of Assyria, as Gen. x. 10. here put, as Rahab or Egypt also is, for the inhabitants thereof; and their calling into the church, or enfranchising into the city of God, is thus expressed. God will make mention of them, or cause them to be remembered, to those that know him,—that is, to his own people of Israel, who, being the Lord's by covenant, both knew the Lord and were known of him.

Philistia also, and Tyre, with Ethiopia, are places often mentioned in Scripture, and, as the former, are here put for the inhabitants thereof. Their calling also to be God's people is thus expressed: 'This man was born there;—that is, any one of the forenamed countries was born by spiritual regeneration in God's church among them.

In the words thus under-stood note these things:

First, The description of God's people the Israelites by this good quality or property, that they know God: where this is plainly taken for granted, that those that be the Lord's people, having true society and acquaintance with him, do undoubtedly know the Lord: 'Irael shall cry unto me, My God, we

know thee,' Hosea viii. 2. 'They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' Jer. xxxi. 34.

The reason hereof is plain, for whomsoever God accepteth into society and fellowship with himself by covenant, unto them doth he reveal and make known himself, that thereby they may be enabled to walk worthy of him, as John x. 14: 'I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and am known of mine. He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him,' John xiv. 21. Thus he dealt with the Jews when he took them into covenant with himself, Exod. iii. 6, 13–16; and so he dealt with the Gentiles when he called them into the fellowship of his Son, as St Paul's speech to the Galatians plainly sheweth: Gal. iv. 8, 9, 'When ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again,' &c.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, it shews plainly the miserable condition of all ignorant people that know not God: it is a fearful sign they are not the Lord's by covenant of grace. They that want the knowledge of God are like horse and mule, Ps. xxxii. 9; worse than the ox or ass, Isa. i. 3; which is not only a state of shame — for some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame,' 1 Cor. xv. 34—but of woeful danger, for the Lord hath a controversy with them, Hosea iv. 1; and will come in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them, 2 Thes. i. 8.

For admonition it serves effectually two ways: first, To try our estate touching this knowledge of God, whether we have so much as may entitle us to his society, that we are his by covenant; whereunto is required, not only a right conceiving of God in our minds, that he is one in essence and three in persons, most holy, wise, eternal, and infinite in power and essence, creator and governor of all things; but also alliance of heart, whereby we acknowledge him, and rest and rely upon him for all the blessings of the covenant of grace in Christ, which is indeed a justifying and saving knowledge: wherof see Isa. liii. 11; John xvii. 3.

Secondly, In the want hereof to give all diligence

to attain unto it, exercising ourselves in his word and works, and sanctifying our endeavour by prayer for the blessing of God's Spirit to bring us to this saving knowledge and acknowledgment of God, by which an entrance shall be made unto us abundantly into his kingdom of grace here, and of glory hereafter. This saving knowledge of God is fruitful, ever joined with other graces, as faith, virtue, patience, temperance, &c., which whoso lacketh is blind, and cannot see afar off, 2 Pet. i. 5-8.

For comfort, this makes greatly to all those that thus rightly know the Lord and acknowledge him; for, if herein they persevere, undoubtedly the Lord will one day own them and acknowledge them before his Father: 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God,' Luke xii. 8; the greatness of which benefit will appear by the misery of the want of it: which see, Mat. vii. 23; 'I never knew you;' 'Depart from me, ye that work iniquity,' Mat. vii. 23, and xxv. 12.

The second thing to be observed here, is the favour of God to these heathen people in their conversion. The Lord will remember them, or make favourable and loving mention of them to his people, or among his people, as some understand the place, which is plainly confirmed, Isa. xix. 24, 25, 'In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt, and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.'

The reason is plain: God's holy and effectual calling brings men into the fellowship and society of his Son, 1 Cor. i. 9. And in this estate there is no difference from outward things, where 'there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free, but Christ is all, and in all,' Col. iii. 11; 'It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell,' Col. i. 19; and all that are effectually called are complete in him, Col. ii. 10; whereupon the same apostle saith, 'Art thou called, being a servant? care not for it. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also, he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant,' 1 Cor. vii. 21, 22.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, see plainly here, that the dignity and honour of a holy calling, to be a Christian, is exceeding great; their prerogatives above natural men, that remain uncalled, be much every manner of way, as Rom. iii. 1, 2. It is 'the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,' Phil. iii. 14. 'A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,' 1 Pet. ii. 9. 'Now they are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,' Eph. ii. 19. 'Fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ,' Eph. iii. 6. Upon occasion of which spiritual and heavenly dignities undoubtedly it was, that Paul a prisoner wished of God, that Agrippa a king, and all that heard him, were altogether such as he was—that is, true believers in Christ—except his bonds, Acts xxvi. 29.

For admonition, it serves two ways; first, To natural men, if ever they desire true spiritual happiness, and honour to their souls, they must take notice of that ordinance of God wherein he vouchsafeth unto men a holy calling, and of that right manner of using the same, whereby God's ordinance may be sanctified unto them. The ordinance is the holy gospel preached; 'that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel,' Eph. iii. 6. 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ,' 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14. 'I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved,' &c., 1 Cor. xiv. 1, 2. This gospel preached is the word of faith, Rom. x. 8. 'The immortal seed of our new birth in all saving graces, 1 Pet. i. 23, 25. And so 'the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth,' Rom. i. 16.

The right manner, wherein we must wait in the foresaid ordinance, for the blessed work of the Spirit in a holy calling, is this: First, By the law to see our miserable estate by nature, which will stir up the soul to seek mercy, as Acts ii. 37, 'They were pricked in their hearts, and said, Men and brethren,

what shall we do;' and to break off the course of sin, whereon is promised the gift of the Spirit. Prov. i. 23, 'Turn you at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you.'

Secondly, To hunger and thirst after the work of the Spirit, as the dry ground doth after rain, as Ps. cxliii. 6, 'I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land.'

This hath the promise of the Spirit, Isa. xliii. 3, '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 offspring.' This earnest spiritual desire must be testified by waiting in the means for the work of the Spirit, as the impotent persons did at the pool of Bethesda for the moving of the waters by the angel, John v. 3, 4. And also by earnest prayer to God, whereto the Spirit is promised, Luke xi. 13, 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?'

Thirdly, To yield obedience to that we know, for to such the Spirit is promised, Acts v. 32. We are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Secondly, All godly men professing the faith must hereby be admonished to walk worthy of their holy calling, as Eph. i. 4, which if they would do, they must remember their present state, which is fellowship with God in Christ, 1 Cor. i. 9; and their future hopes in eternal glory, 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14. Both which do call for daily and constant care, and endeavour to leave sin and to live godly: as 2 Cor. vii. 1, 2. 'And every one that hath this hope, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' 1 John iii. 3.

For comfort, this makes greatly to all godly ones that are effectually called; when misery and distress in the world shall come upon them, they have wherewith to comfort themselves; for, God by his holy calling hath brought them into the society of his Son, as before is shewed, and nothing that befalls them outwardly can separate them from his love, but in all the afflictions of this world they are more than conquerors, Rom. viii. 35, 37, 38; this calling is of grace, Gal. i. 15; and grace is a sufficient ground of comfort under the greatest buffeting: 2

Cor. xii. 9, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.' •

The third thing to be noted here is, that special state which declares any man, of any nation, to be a free denizen of God's city, and a true member of his church; namely, to be born there; yet not by natural generation, but by spiritual regeneration, whereof, Christ speaking, saith 'they must be born again, or from above,' John iii. 3; 'born of water and of the holy Ghost,' chap. iii. 5; 'not of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God,' chap. i. 13.

Mark here, then, that 'to be born again' declares any man of any nation to be a free denizen of God's holy city, and a true member of his church.

This is plain by the former place, John iii. 3, 6, to all those that understand the nature and force of an exception to a general rule, which is to put the contrary to the rule. It is, indeed, a true rule in Scripture that God's church is God's kingdom, into which man, in the corrupt state of nature, cannot enter as heir to inherit. 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption,' 1 Cor. xv. 50; but yet, if such a one be born again, he doth certainly enter as heir, and shall inherit, as 1 Pct. i. 3, 4, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible,' &c.

Mark also, that true faith and regeneration do accompany each other. 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God,' 1 John v. 1. Now, true believers are children, Gal. iii. 26; for 'ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;' and so, free, as Mat. xvii. 26, they are heirs, Gal. iv. 7, and have great prerogatives, implied, John i. 12, 13; expressed, Eph. ii. 19; 'fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God? fellow-heirs, of the same body, chap. iii. 6.

The reason hereof is plain; for this change of state in soul by regeneration, is the proper fruit of the spirit of adoption, in an effectual applying of the power and efficacy of Christ's death and resurrection, both which proceed from the special love of God



the Father, in that saving work which actually makes them his children, and so heirs of the kingdom, Rom. viii. 17, joint-heirs with Christ, and so free, for the children are free, Mat. xvii. 26. Christ Jesus the natural Son doth make them free, and so they are free indeed, John viii. 36; for 'where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty,' 2 Cor. iii. 17; therefore the apostle saith this begetting again is to a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, That man's being in the state of grace may be truly and certainly known. For regeneration or the new birth may be certainly known, which is the unfailing foundation of the state of grace. 1 John v. 1, 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.' And true faith may be known, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Again, we see natural generation is evident by the enlivened parts of a true human body: their view and employment doth evince natural or corporeal generation: why then shall not the lively parts of the new man declare certainly our regeneration, whereby we are begotten and born of God; as knowledge in the mind, holiness in the will and affections, and righteousness in life and conversation? Eph. iv. 21-24, compared with Rom. vi. 19. Whence we may see that the papists do err in saying that the state of grace cannot be certainly known but by extraordinary revelation. We may well say 'they err, not knowing the Scripture, nor the power of God,' see 1 John v. 13, for faith, and chap. iii. 14, for love, as declaring this estate.

Secondly, That God's children shall undoubtedly persevere in the state of grace. They that be endued with true faith and repentance, and other saving graces, shall never lose the same. True grace may be lessened or weakened in degree, but not finally or totally lost. For all such are regenerate by the Spirit, and his work abides; his seed remains so as they cannot make sin their trade, by sinning unto death, or with full consent, 1 John iii. 9, and v. 18.

*Object.* But some believe for a time, Luke viii. 18.

*Ans.* Their faith is human, acquired and got by reading, hearing, and other good exercises of reli-

gion, without the work of the Spirit; it is not infused by the Holy Ghost in the fore-said means. Between which kinds of faith this is the true difference, that acquired faith ever leaves some corner for the devil, some sin unreformed, as Acts viii. 13, 19, 23; but faith infused purifies the heart from the dominion of every sin, as Acts xv. 9.

For admonition, this serves effectually to move every one to give all diligence for this estate; first, to get it; then, to keep it. For the getting of it, consider Christ's command, Luke xiii. 24, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate.' Which strift stands in two things: first, That we receive with meekness the word of God—both the law, to discover sin, and to humble us for the same, and the gospel, to cast into our hearts the seed of grace; as James i. 21, 'Receive with meekness the engrafted word,' wherein God's Spirit doth beget, James i. 18, 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth;' 1 Pet. i. 23, 25, 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.' It is the word of faith, Rom. x. 8, which doth ever accompany regeneration, 1 John v. 1. Whence John i. 11-13, 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 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.' Secondly, That we pray unto God instantly and earnestly for God's Spirit, which doth beget unto eternal life, Luke xi. 13.

For the preserving and keeping of this estate, we must do three things: first, Keep fuel to the spark of grace cast into our hearts by regeneration, which is by endeavouring that the word of God may dwell richly in us, Col. iii. 16. Secondly, Blow upon the spark when the fuel is put to, which is by prayer, as 1 Thes. v. 17. This David did, Ps. li. 10-12, 'Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.' Thirdly, Wrath against sin, which is as water to quench the Spirit; and walk in obedience, which is pleasing unto God, and entitles us to God's presence and preservation. 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed,' John viii. 31. 'Whosoever heareth these sayings of

mine, and doeth 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,' Mat. vii. 24, 25. 'Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,' Phil. ii. 12. 'Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren,' 1 Pet. i. 22.

For comfort, this makes greatly to the regenerate; for God hath begun a good work in them, and will undoubtedly perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ, Phil. i. 6. Herein is the riches of God's love and mercy seen: of his love, 1 John iii. 1; of his mercy, 1 Pet. i. 3-5. Now whom he thus loves, to the end he loves them, John xiii. 1. His gifts and calling are without repentance, Rom. xi. 29. By regeneration we are sons, and so heirs, chap. viii. 17. And who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? chap. viii. 31, 33.

The fourth thing here to be noted is, The people and nations in whom he gives instance, pointing them out by name, with command of special observance, that by effectual calling and regeneration shall become true members of his church.—namely, the Egyptians, Babylonians, Philistines, men of Tyre, and Ethiopians, under whom he comprehendeth other Gentiles, yet nameth such as were well known unto the Jews (then God's only people) formerly to have shewed themselves their greatest enemies. Egypt and Babylon were the places of Israel's bondage and captivity. The Philistines likewise were sore oppressors and lords over them, Judges xv. 11. even forty years together, chap. xiii. 1. The men of Tyre were bitter enemies, delivering up the whole captivity to Elom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant, Amos i. 9. Their enmity see further, Joel iii. 4, 6, and Ps. lxxxiii. 7. The Ethiopians were likewise grievous enemies, as their bloody assault with a large army did plainly shew, 2 Chron. xiv. 9. Yet for all this, 'Behold, saith the Lord, these shall be converted, and become friends to the church, free denizens of Zion: for all nations shall serve him,' meaning Christ, prefigured by Solomon, Ps. lxxii. 11. 'The Gentiles shall come to thy light. The abund-

ance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee,' Isa. lx. 3, 5. 'That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord,' Acts xv. 17. In particular of Egypt and Babylon, see Isa. xix. 19, 21, 25, 'In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it. And blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands,' And of Tyre, Ps. xlv. 12, 'The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift.' And of Ethiopia, Ps. lxxviii. 31, 'Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.'

But why doth he instance in these nations especially, whenas in them he intends to shew the conversion of the Gentiles?

This he doth for three causes: first, To shew the greatness of his power, who cannot only confound, but even convert the greatest enemies of his church. For their confounding, see Exod. xiv. 27, 28, and Num. xvi.; and for conversion, see Acts ix. 1, &c.

Secondly, This he doth to manifest even to enemies his great love unto his church; as he saith, Rev. iii. 9, 'I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.'

Thirdly, For the encouragement of his church and children unto faith and patience in the times of opposition by mighty enemies. For the true God, who is God of the church, can either confound or convert them at his pleasure; or if he do neither of those things, yet he can cause the wrath of his enemies to turn to his praise, Ps. lxxvi. 10; as is plain in the rage of Nebuchadnezzar against his servants, Dan. iii. 19, 20, 28, 29.

This serves for instruction, with confutation, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, in the conversion of these mighty enemies we may plainly see that when God is pleased to shew mercy in Christ, the gracious work of his Holy

Spirit is irresistible. Corruption indeed is strong, but yet the grace of the Spirit is stronger; as is said, 1 John iv. 4, 'Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.' The devil, indeed, is the strong man armed, that keeps the house of every natural heart, but yet Christ by his Spirit is stronger, and can come in and cast out the strong man, Luke xi. 21, 22. This is plainly shewed in fit resemblances: Isa. xi. 6, 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid.' &c., which was truly verified in Saul, that of a most bloody persecutor was made a zealous preacher, Acts ix.: according to that of our Saviour, John vi. 37, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me.' Though none can come except the Father draw, John vi. 44; yet when God draws they run, Cant. i. 4. By which it is plain that they grossly err that hold God's saving work of grace may be resisted by man's corruption: for who hath resisted his will, that can raise up children unto Abraham of very stones? Rom. ix. 19; Mat. iii. 9. Indeed, our Saviour saith to the rebellious Jews, Mat. xxiii. 37, 'How often would I have gathered you as an hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but you would not.' And St Stephen telleth the rebellious Jews they had ever resisted the Holy Ghost, Acts vii. 51. But they both speak of resistance made to the outward ministry, not to the inward powerful work of the Spirit.

For admonition, it serves profitably both to godly ministers and people, not to despair of any man's conversion, though never so refractory or rebellious to God's ordinance, till they manifest their rejection of God by committing the unpardonable sin, whereof St John speaks, 1 John v. 16, for he can make a Paul of Saul, and cause the lion and the lamb to live together quietly.

This indeed ought to be their behaviour that wish and wait for the means of grace, according to their places, in instruction, exhortation, admonition, and the like, as 2 Tim. ii. 24-26; in public, if they be ministers, and in private, if they be private Christians: as Mat. xviii. 15, &c., 'If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother,' &c. For private Christians may be means of conversion: James v.

19, 20, 'Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.' Secondly, They must pray earnestly to God for the work of his Spirit: 1 John v. 16, 'If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.' From unfeigned desire, as Paul did, Rom. x. 1, 'My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved;' and chap. ix. 2, 3, 'I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart: for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.' Consider David's behaviour for the natural life of his child: 2 Sam. xii. 16, 'David besought God for the child, and David fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the earth.' And shall not the spiritual life of the soul be esteemed much more precious? Thirdly, They must walk before them in the example of a godly life: as St Peter exhorteth Christian wives to do before their heathen husbands: 1 Pet. iii. 1-3, 'Ye wives, be in subjection to your husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may, without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives,' &c. This godly life hath a gracious promise: Prov. xvi. 7, 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.'

For comfort, this makes greatly to the godly in the strongest opposition by malicious enemies, let them look up to God and consider what he can do, either for the confusion or conversion of their enemies. For confusion, see what hath been said before, and add the consideration of God's dealing with the two captains, 2 Kings i. 10, 12; and for Gideon against the Midianites, Judges vii. 22; and for Jehoshaphat against the three kings of Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir, 2 Chron. xx. 22, 23. For conversion of enemies, God can do it either to temporal outward kindness, as in Laban towards Jacob, Gen. xxxi. 29; in Esau toward Jacob, chap. xxxiii. 1, 4; or to true sincere and unfeigned love, as in Darius, Dan. vi., and in Saul, that was afterward called Paul, towards the church, Acts ix. 26.

Ver. 5. *And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her, and the Highest himself shall establish her.*

Here the psalmist proceeds in the confirmation of that he had said of the city of God in the third verse, that glorious things were spoken of her, namely, that beside the conversion of many unto her, out of foreign nations, which had formerly been her greatest enemies, ver. 4, she should enjoy within herself a double honour: first, The calling and conversion of many within her; secondly, Confirmation and establishment from the Most High.

For the first. The calling and conversion of many within her is thus expressed: 'Of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her.' Where by birth (as hath been said, ver. 4.) we must understand, not natural birth by corporal generation, but spiritual birth in regeneration: and the phrase, 'this and that man,' or 'man and man,' (as it is in the Hebrew, and the Greeks do so render it,) may note out every man, meaning that is converted, as the like words are taken, Esth. i. 8; and so Paul saith, 'Jerusalem which is above is the mother of us all,' Gal. iv. 26. Or in regard that the phrase, 'man and man,' here used, is opposed to the like phrase in the former verse, 'this man was born there;' it seems likeliest that here he denoteth the conversion of more in Zion than in other particular places.

Mark here then, that it is and shall be Zion's glory and renown to have man and man born in her; that is, many men, of all sorts and conditions, born of God, called and converted in her to the true faith; see Isa. liv. 1, 'Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear: break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.' Which place is best expounded by Gal. iv. 27. Sarah, long barren, and her son, did prefigure Jerusalem from above, the heavenly Jerusalem, mount Zion, Heb. xii. 22. Hagar and Ishmael prefigured the people of the Jews, that clave to the covenant of works given in mount Sinai, which gendereth unto bondage, see Gal. iv. 22, 26. This glorious thing foreshewed of God's city received accomplishment partly in the apostle's time, when even in Jerusalem more were converted unto the faith at one or two sermons, than we read

of in any other place; three thousand, Acts ii. 41; five thousand, Acts iv. 4; 'Believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women,' Acts v. 14.

But chiefly it shall be accomplished in the second calling of the Jews, when all Israel shall be saved, Rom. xi. 26.

The reason is plain: For multitude of converts is a manifest evidence of God's special favour, in the blessing of saving grace, which is the greatest renown that can be; as we may see by Christ's own rejoicing in it, Heb. ii. 13, 'Behold I and the children which God hath given me.'

In ancient time it was counted a great renown to have many children, as Gen. xxx. 20, 'Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons.' And of Obel-edom that he had eight sons, because God blessed him, 1 Chron. xxvi. 5. How much more then is it an honour to bring forth children unto God!

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, see here what is the true renown of any kingdom, county, city, parish, or family, namely, to have man and man born of God there; that is, many people effectually called and converted unto God; as Acts xix. 10.

There be many things that will commend men in the world, as honour, wealth, beauty, power, &c.; but none of these, nor all of them, without an holy calling, will commend men unto God.

For admonition, it serves effectually, both to ministers and to people, that they give all diligence in God's means for the attaining of this estate. Ministers must endeavour both for themselves and others, and for this end must receive into their own hearts, and dispense to others, the pure word of God, which is the immortal seed of this new birth, as it is called, James i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 23, 25. For their diligence in faithful dispensation, see 2 Tim. iv. 1; 1 Cor. ix. 16, and iv. 2. And because all their endeavour without God's blessing is nothing, therefore they must pray instantly and earnestly for the blessing of the Spirit to sanctify the word, as St Paul doth, Eph. iii. 14, &c., 'For this cause I bow my knee unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is

named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.' And that they may have better title to audience, they must endeavour to walk before God uprightly and honestly; 'For God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth,' John ix. 31.

And the people, seeing the benefit is theirs, must conscientiously exercise themselves in the same Christian duties—viz., hearing the word, praying unto God, and a godly living. For the word it is the seed, therefore receive it both morning and evening. Consider what Solomon saith, Eccles. xi. 6, 'In the morning sow thy seed, in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.' And seeing the blessing is in the hand of God, not in the means, as Rom. ix. 16, 'It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy;' and John i. 11-13, 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not: but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed 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;' therefore must they be instant in prayer, and careful of godly behaviour, that their prayers may be more available with God, as James v. 16, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'

The second thing in this verse, shewing the glorious state of the church foreshewed by David, is this, 'The Highest himself shall stablish her;' which is a great prerogative, for the church of God hath many and mighty enemies, the devil himself, and all his instruments, who are all wicked spirits and all wicked men; yet this is sufficient ground of comfort, that the true God, who is Lord of the church, is above them all, and can restrain or confound them all when he will, and can establish his church

and children in the state of grace unto all eternity.

In this prerogative note two things: first, The title whereby God is styled; and secondly, The work he undertakes for the good of his church.

The title is, The Highest, or Most High; where this is plain—

The true God is the highest above all: Ps. cxvii. 9, 'Thou, Lord, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods;' Gen. xiv. 19, 22, 'Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.'

The reason is plain. The true God is infinite in power and majesty, and others besides him, in heaven and earth, are finite and under him: 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable,' Ps. cxlv. 3; 'Angels, and authorities, and powers are subject unto him,' 1 Pet. iii. 22.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction, that we choose the Most High for our God, and labour to know and acknowledge him, as 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, 'And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind;' and give him our hearts in love, fear, joy, and confidence; as Prov. xxiii. 26, 'So shall we be free from the fear of evil;' as Ps. xci. 1, 2, 9, 10, 14, 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,' &c. 'Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.'

For admonition, that we make this sovereignty in God, above all others, to be the ground of inward fear, and outward obedience to the true God: see Luke xii. 4, 5, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.' And add 1 Pet. iii. 22, 'Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God: angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.'

For comfort, it makes greatly to the godly against

all oppositions from the great ones of the world. For the Most High is their God, and for them: whereupon they may say, as Ps. cxviii. 6, 'The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?' yea, as Ps. iii. 6, 'I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.' Consider what the prophet Jeremiah saith: chap. xx. 11, 'The Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.' Also Dan. iii. 16-18, 'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said unto the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.' &c.

The second thing to be noted here is, the gracious work which God undertakes for his church; he himself will establish her.

The true God will confirm and establish his church, and every true member of it, in their good and comfortable estate, against all opposition by their mightiest enemies: see Ps. xlvi. 1-4, 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, &c. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.'

This river is the Lord himself, Isa. xxxiii. 21, 22, 'The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us.' 'God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early,' Ps. xlvi. 5. 'God is known in her palaces for a refuge,' Ps. lxxviii. 3.

The reason is, for that God's church is his, by a more near and peculiar title than any other people in the world—*as*, namely, by election, 1 Pet. i. 2; redemption, Titus ii. 14; sanctification by the Spirit, 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14; and by special covenant of grace, Ps. l. 5; called a covenant of salt, for the perpetuity of it, 2 Chron. xiii. 5; from which God will never turn away; as Jer.

xxiii. 39, 40, 42, 'I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. 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. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.'

This serves for instruction and for admonition.

For instruction, see that the church of God, and every true member of it, is more blessed and happy than the state and condition of any other people; for the Most High will establish them: who then can weaken or overthrow their comfortable state? 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' Rom. viii. 31. 'The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand,' Ps. xxxvii. 23, 24; well therefore may it be said of them, as Ps. cxliv. 15, 'Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.'

More particularly, this is a sure ground of perseverance to every true child of God in the state of grace, for they are true members of that church which God himself will establish.

For admonition, this must stir up every one effectually to labour to be truly born again in God's church; 'For the devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,' 1 Pet. v. 8. And only they that be truly regenerate shall be able to withstand his assaults; for they only have the Lord with them, and for them. Now true regeneration contains a total change both in mind, heart, and life, and is indeed the work of God, by his Spirit; yet in the means, the word, and prayer, wherein we must exercise ourselves in a holy manner, and beware we do not quench the Spirit, or cool any good motion begun thereby.

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Ver. 6. *The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.*

This verse setteth out another great privilege of Zion, God's true church, in regard of the honour and happiness of every true member of it; namely,

that when God writeth down the names of the people that belong unto him, he doth count and reckon those for his that be born again in the church.

For the better understanding whereof we must know that the prophet doth here speak of God after the manner of great personages, who use to write and enrol in a book the names of those that they accept and receive into their houses and families, as members thereof, to any place of service; for which see Gen. xl. 20; Pharaoh, on his birthday, making a feast unto all his servants, lifted up the head of his chief butler and of his chief baker among his servants, that is, taking a view of all his servants, according to their names written in his book—as the same phrase is used, Num. xxxi. 49, there translated, ‘taking the sum,’ which in Genesis is rendered, ‘lifting up the head’—he reckoned his butler and chief baker among his servants. In like manner the Scripture calleth the church the house of the living God, I Tim. i. 15; and for our better conceiving of his certain and perfect knowledge, and remembrance, both of all things that ever were, are, or shall be in the world, and also of all those persons that in a special manner belong unto him as true members of his church on earth, whom he means to glorify in heaven, doth tell us of certain books which God hath, even three in number, which we may not unfitly thus distinguish by name. First, The book of his eternal prescience, Ps. cxxxix. 16, ‘Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members are written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.’ This is nothing else but his perfect eternal foresight of all things before they were, whereby he knew them as perfectly as if they had been actually written in a book.

The second is the book of his actual providence, whereby he doth most perfectly take actual knowledge of, and remember all things whatsoever, even every thought, word, and deed of every man. Hereof see Ps. cxxxix. 1–3, ‘O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me; thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off,’ &c.; and Ps. lvi. 8, ‘Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?’ And according to this he will

judge the world, Rev. xx. 12, ‘I saw the dead, both small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.’

The third is the book of life, which is God’s eternal purpose, for the saving of his elect by Christ, actually declared by their effectual calling, or regeneration, by the Holy Ghost, in this life, in which estate they are reserved and kept for glory.

This book may be said to be twice written in: first, From all eternity in God’s purpose, whereof see Rev. xiii. 8, ‘Whose names are not written in the book of life of the lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.’ Secondly, Actually in God’s work of effectual calling or regeneration, in the time of natural life, which is termed ‘God’s calling according to purpose,’ Rom. viii. 28. And indeed, of this latter writing in the book of life, by regeneration or effectual calling, is this place to be understood. As if he should have said, That the church hath great honour, and the true members of it great happiness, is hereby apparent, that when God writes up the people actually in the book of life that be his, he reckons those for his that be regenerate and born again in his church.

In the words thus understood note two things: first, God’s work of special mercy to the true members of the church. Secondly, The quality and condition of those persons to whom the foresaid work of mercy is certainly vouchsafed.

For the first, God’s special work of mercy to the true members of the church is this, he actually writes their names in the book of life, and then reckons and accounts them to be his own. This is plainly shewed in his golden chain, Rom. viii. 29, 30, ‘Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 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.’

Upon this effectual calling he bids his disciples rejoice that their names were written in heaven, Luke x. 20; and upon the good effects and signs of effectual calling, he saith of certain teachers that

were zealous of God's glory in the church of Philippi, that their names were in the book of life, Phil. iv. iii.

The reason hereof may be two ways considered.

First, Of the fact itself, in God writing men's names in the book of life; and that is only God's good pleasure. 'According as he hath chosen us in him, before the beginning 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,' Eph. i. 4, 5. 'I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight,' Mat. xi. 25, 26.

Secondly, Of this manner of expressing God's special favour, in effectual calling; saying, it is his writing their names in the book of life. For thus he speaketh; partly for his own sake, to manifest the stableness of his counsel and purpose for their salvation; for in God's divine wisdom and good pleasure, it is as sure and firm as if their names were really written in a book; partly also, for the true peace and comfort of those that be truly and effectually called, that they may not doubt of their happy estate, but in and by this strong consolation of God's writing their names in the book of life, encourage their hearts to perseverance against all oppositions from the world, the flesh, and the devil, as Rom. viii. 33, 35, 38, 39, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?' &c.

This serves for instruction, and for admonition.

For instruction, see here that the state of the true members of God's church is for God's special favour and life eternal, most stable and firm; for God hath written their names amongst his people in the book of life, and accounts them for his own. Now them that be thus his own he loves to the end, John xiii. 1. The gifts of grace in this calling are without repentance, Rom. xi. 29. This their estate hath a sure foundation, he knoweth them to be his, 2 Tim. ii. 19. This is to be marked, to arm ourselves against the uncomfortable doctrine of papists and Arminians, that teach the true saints of God may fall from grace.

For admonition, to give all diligence unto the as-

urance of this estate for ourselves, which is St Peter's counsel, 2 Pet. i. 5-7, 10, 11, where also he shews the way, by adding grace to grace, and expressing the truth thereof in obedience: 'Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge, &c. And give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall,' &c.

The second point to be noted is, the quality and condition of those parties whom God writes with his people in the book of life, and so reckons for his own. They are 'born there'—that is, born again by regeneration in the true church: see 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you;' and James i. 18, 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.'

The reason is plain; for by effectual calling, which is actually writing in the book of life, men are brought into spiritual society and fellowship with God in Christ, 1 Cor. i. 9, which necessarily requires regeneration. For the state of man in corrupt nature is darkness under the power of Satan, which can have no society with God, as 2 Cor. vi. 14, 16; 1 John i. 6. Therefore it is said, they that are brought to the state of sons by faith are born again, John i. 12, 13; 1 John v. 1.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, That man's particular state in soul, for fruition of God's saving love, and favour in Christ, may be known by ordinary grace, without extraordinary revelation. For whosoever is born again, is in that estate, his name is actually written in the book of life, as this text implies. Now, the state of this new birth may be known by faith, 1 John v. 1, with 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

Secondly, See here the great necessity of the faithful dispensation of the word in the preaching of it unto man's true happiness: for without regeneration there is no salvation, John iii. 3, 5, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'



And the word preached is the means in which God works, as before, James i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 23, 25. Consider, that though God can convert without preaching, by his absolute power, yet he is pleased to work by this means. 'For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believed.' 1 Cor. i. 21; as in the eunuch, Acts viii. 27, &c., and in Cornelius, Acts x. 1, &c.

For admonition, this must stir up every one to give all diligence to get into the state of regeneration. It is indeed God's work, but ordinarily by his Spirit, in the ministry of the word,—both the law, to break up the fallow-ground, and the gospel, to cast in the seed of grace, as before, 1 Pet. i. 23, 25. We must therefore exercise ourselves in this word, and pray for the word of the Spirit, and so to use these ordinances, that we may have title to the work and blessing of the Spirit.

In which holy endeavour, breaking off the course of sin, and hungering and thirsting after grace, we must continue, till we find ourselves renewed, and ourselves born again.

For comfort, to those that find and feel this blessed work of the new birth; for blessed are they. This work shews their names are written in heaven, and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Let us look well, therefore, unto both parts of it, as well in the mortification of corruption, as in the repair and renewing of God's image, and then we cannot want the comfort of assurance, to have our names written in the book of life.

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Ver. 7. *As will the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all our springs are in thee.*

In these words the prophet concludes the psalm with two most comfortable privileges and prerogatives of the church: first, That it is the only place for true delight and pleasure; secondly, That it is the well-head of all heavenly and spiritual blessings.

The first he expresseth in a metonymy of the efficient, naming singers and players on instruments, which were special agents in the cheerful praising of God, under David and Solomon, and in the succeeding times of legal service: as we may see for David's

time, 1 Chron. ix. 33, and xxv. 1-3, which vocal music did prefigure the joy of the Holy Ghost under the gospel, and so sheweth plainly,

That the church of God under the gospel, for the true members of it, is the only place for true spiritual joy and rejoicing for evermore. So it is prophesied: Isa. xxxv. 10, 'The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.' And they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended,' chap. lx. 14, 15, 20. 'For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them,' chap. lxi. 7. See it assured by Christ himself: John xvi. 20, 22, 'Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy, your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.' And verified in Christians: Acts ii. 46, 47, 'They continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people;' chap. v. 41, 'They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.' As 1 Pet. i. 8, 'Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory;' 1 Thes. v. 16, 'Rejoice evermore.' And 'rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice,' Phil. iv. 4.

The true ground hereof is from the incomparable blessings of the covenant, vouchsafed to the true members of his church.

For, first, In Christ Jesus God himself doth betroth them unto him, yea, marry them, and become their most dear and loving husband, as Hosea ii. 19, 20; Isa. liv. 5. Now times of espousal are times of rejoicing: 'Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come,' Rev. xix. 7; 'With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the

king's palace,' Ps. xlv. 15; 'We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine,' saith the church to Christ, Cant. i. 4.

Secondly, He doth fit them for his near spiritual society, by giving his own Son to be their Saviour and Redeemer, washing away their sins in his blood: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'He is made unto us of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;' Eph. v. 25, 26, 'Christ gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, and make it to himself a glorious church,' &c. Now the remembrance hereof is matter of exceeding great joy, Luke ii. 10. Therefore the blessed Virgin Mary saith, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour,' Luke i. 46, 47.

Thirdly, He bestoweth on them his Holy Spirit, John xiv. 16, 17, for 'whosoever hath not the Spirit of God is none of his,' Rom. iii. 9. Now this Spirit is the fountain of joy, and thereupon is called the Comforter, the graces whereof he doth plentifully bestow upon them, and therein gives them cause of everlasting joy.

Fourthly, God sendeth and continueth unto them his blessed word, the gospel of peace, and the word of their reconciliation with God, and of salvation to their souls; whereof the psalmist saith, 'Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound,' Ps. lxxxix. 15; and the apostle Paul, out of the prophet Isaiah, 'How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!' Rom. x. 15. Solomon saith, 'Light is a pleasant thing,' Eccles. xi. 7; now the gospel preached is a spiritual light, that shineth unto those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, even to guide their feet in the way of peace, than which nothing can be more pleasant and joyful; see Mat. iv. 16; Luke i. 77, 79.

Fifthly, God's special providence is over his church, not only to preserve them from evil, both corporal and spiritual, which their enemies would bring upon them, but also to enrich them with all needful comforts and blessings, both temporal and spiritual. 'In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day,' Isa. xxvii. 2, 3. This is that

Keeper of Israel who doth neither slumber nor sleep, who keepeth his church from all evil. 'The sun shall not smite her by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, even for evermore,' Ps. cxxi. 3, &c.

This serves for instruction, and for admonition.

For instruction, it sheweth plainly that natural men are fearfully blinded by the god of this world, for they live in the church among the godly, yet they do not conceive of nor discern their happy estate; as St John saith, 'The world knoweth us not,' 1 John iii. 1. They think the estate of a Christian to be very forlorn and miserable, void of all content and comfort; therefore do they debase them in their esteem, accounting them the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things, 1 Cor. iv. 13. They reproach and revile them with most base and odious terms: as 2 Kings ix. 11, 'What did this mad fellow with thee?' Acts xxiv. 5, 'We have found this man a pestilent fellow.' And Festus saith, 'Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad,' Acts xxvi. 24. Yea, Christ's own friends judged so of him, Mark iii. 21; and the Jews said, 'He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?' John x. 20. 'Now if they do this to the green tree, what will they do to the dry?' Luke xxiii. 31. 'But wisdom is justified of her children,' Mat. xi. 19. As the things that are magnified in the world are abomination with God, Luke xvi. 15,—see it in the lukewarmness of the Laodiceans, Rev. iii. 16, 17, 19;—so the things that are magnified with the Lord are abominable to the world: as, to live godly, making conscience of all sin and of every good duty, and being zealous of God's glory. Whereby we may see that the veil of ignorance hangs over their eyes; they can no better discern the happy state of the godly, than a blind man can judge of colours.

For admonition, this serves notably to move every one to be as careful to become a true member of the church, as he is desirous of true and lasting joy. The way is shewed, 1 Pet. ii. 4, 6, in so yielding to God's means of a holy calling that we forsake our sinful ways, as Isa. lv. 7, do come to Christ by faith,

and as living stones be builded on him, the tried corner-stone, to become a spiritual house. Which estate we must testify by the properties of the godly, who be true citizens of Zion, set down particularly, Ps. xv., and xxiv. 3, 4. And so we shall find that 'a day in God's courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.' Ps. lxxxiv. 10. Better to be a doorkeeper here than a commander elsewhere, for here is the true Comforter, and nowhere else: 'The world cannot receive him,' John xiv. 17.

*Objct.* This seems to be otherwise by a double affliction that doth follow the church and the true members of it: one from the world, in persecution, as Christ foretold, John xvi. 33; the other from the Lord, in terror of soul and sorrow for sins, as Job iii. 24, 26. 'Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy? For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.' And Ps. xxxviii. 3, 4, 'There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over my head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.'

*Ans.* The first affliction from men hindereth not the fruition of this spiritual joy, as Acts v. 41, 'They went away from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.' 'Ye rejoice in the faith, though for a time ye be in heaviness through manifold temptations,' 1 Pet. i. 6. Whereupon St James bids them count it 'exceeding great joy when they fall into sundry temptations,' James i. 2. And our Saviour Christ bids the godly 'rejoice and be exceeding glad when they are persecuted and reviled for righteousness' sake,' Mat. v. 10-12. And the second affliction, from the hand of God, in terror of soul, is but a temporary bitter preparative unto everlasting joy. The Lord for their true and thorough humiliation doth visit upon them the days of Baalim, but afterward he will betroth them to himself, as Hosea ii. 13, 14, 18, 19. 'Though they sow in tears, they shall reap in joy,' &c., Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6. Thus are they chastened of the Lord, that they might not be condemned with the world, 1 Cor. xi. 32. Say therefore with the church, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will

bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness,' Micah vii. 9.

*All my springs are in thee.* The last prerogative of the church, that in it be all the well-springs and fountains of all God's spiritual and heavenly blessings. Springs, we know, are such places whence water doth flow out of the earth constantly and continually, for the refreshing of man and beast; and by fit resemblance the Lord would have us to conceive that in his church he doth provide plenty and store of all spiritual and heavenly blessings.

This will more plainly appear if we consider what spiritual fountains and springs of blessings be in the true church, and nowhere else.

The first and chief well-spring of all blessings is the true God, who is therefore called the fountain of living waters, Jer. ii. 23. And according to the threefold use of water-springs to the sons of men, may we well conceive the true God to be the fountain of blessings to his church.

First, Water-springs serve for washing, cleansing, and purifying. So God in Christ Jesus doth 'open a fountain to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem (which is his true church) for sin and for uncleanness,' Zec. xiii. 1. 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin,' 1 John i. 7.

Secondly, Water-springs serve to make fruitful both herbs and plants that grow thereby. So God in Christ, by his Spirit, maketh the hearts and souls of his children fruitful in grace: '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 offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses,' Isa. xlv. 3, 4.

Thirdly, Springs of water are very comfortable, and yield great refreshing both to man and beast, especially in hot countries and time of drought; see Gen. xxi. 15, 19; Judges xv. 18, 19; Ps. civ. 10-12. So God in Christ, by his Spirit, which is the Comforter, becomes the everlasting fountain of spiritual refreshing to the hearts and souls of all his children: 'O God, my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee,' Ps. lxxiii. 1, 3. 'If any man

thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive,' John vii. 37-39. '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,' John vi. 14.

The second spring of blessings in the church is the evangelical ministry, even the gospel preached and sacraments administered, sanctified by prayer for the blessing of the Spirit. Hereof the Lord saith, 'A fountain shall come forth out of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim,' Joel iii. 18. And to the same end serves the vision of waters coming from under the door-threshold of the sanctuary, Ezek. xlvii. 1, &c., both which may be well expounded by Isa. ii. 3. 'For out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' Now this derived well-spring of the evangelical ministry serveth instrumentally in the church,

First, For washing and cleansing the soul from the filth of sin. Therefore hath God ordained baptism to represent our spiritual washing in Christ's blood by the Holy Ghost; whereof also, with the word, it becomes a gracious instrument, when this free Spirit pleaseth, John iii. 8. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit.' '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,' Titus iii. 5. 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.'

Secondly, For making the heart fruitful in grace. Therefore is the gospel called the work of his grace, Acts xx. 32; and is said to bring forth fruit, Col. i. 6.

Thirdly, For ministering spiritual joy and refreshing to the soul. Therefore is the whole evangelical ministry called the ministry of the Spirit, which is the Comforter, 2 Cor. iii. 8; because it worketh therewith, 1 Cor. iii. 5, and is given therein, Gal. iii. 2. And we through patience and comfort of the Scripture have hope, Rom. xv. 4. God's words to Jeremiah were the joy and rejoicing of his heart, Jer. xv. 16. David rejoiced therein as one that findeth a great spoil. And the Lord's supper is the seal of

our redemption and salvation in Christ, the tidings whereof is exceeding great joy, Luke ii. 10.

Now all these fountains are in the church, and nowhere else. The world is without the true God by covenant of grace, Eph. ii. 12, and so hath nothing but dry pits and cisterns that hold no water, as Jer. ii. 13. And the evangelical ministry is not out of the church, for when it comes among the heathen it is God's merciful visitation to take out of them a people for his name, Acts xv. 14; see Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, 'He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel: he hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for his judgments they have not known them.'

The reason hereof is God's own good pleasure, as of mere grace and favour, choosing them in Christ and accepting them into covenant, so vouchsafing the participation of these spiritual springs and fountains of heavenly blessings unto them, that hereby they may be fitted for society and fellowship with him, and become such as he may take delight and pleasure in: see Ezek. xvi. 8, 'When I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water,' &c.; 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me,' John xiii. 8.

This serves for instruction, admonition, and comfort.

For instruction two ways: first, Hence will plainly follow that out of the church there is no salvation, for these springs are the wells of salvation, Isa. xii. 3; and the text saith they are all in the church, which is plain by induction. They that are out of the church are 'without Christ and without God in the world,' Eph. ii. 12. And with him only in Christ is the well of life, Ps. xxxvi. 9. 'He that hath not the Son hath not life,' 1 John v. 12. And wanting Christ, they cannot have the Spirit, John xiv. 17; and so cannot be sanctified nor saved.

Secondly, See here the surpassing excellency and happiness of the church above all other states of people in the world. The church is as the garden of Eden, wherein is a pure river of the water of life, and the tree of life, Rev. xxii. 1, 2; whereas the

rest of the world is as a barren wilderness. Jer. xvii. 6, 8. The church is like the heritage of Jacob, blessed of God; and the rest of the world like the mountains of Esau, which God hath cursed, Mal. i. 2-4. The church is the father's house, where every servant hath meat enough; the rest of the world is like the citizen's fields, where husks with hogs are the best provision, Luke xv. 16, 17. The true church is like the land of Canaan, flowing with milk and honey, that drinketh water of the rain of heaven,—a land which the Lord himself careth for—the eyes of the Lord are always upon it; the rest of the world is as the land of Egypt, which men water with their feet. Deut. xi. 10-12.

For admonition, it serves two ways: first, To natural men, to stir them up to consider seriously of these privileges of the church, to have all God's springs in her, that so they may be affected towards her, as David was, Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 2. 'How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' Ps. xlii. 1, 2. 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?' Ps. lxxiii. 1. 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.' Ps. cxxii. 1. 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.' Yea, of Samson's mind, Judges xv. 18, 19, crying out after these springs, as for the means of spiritual and eternal life.

Secondly, To all that profess themselves to be members of the church, that they labour to give evidence of their participation of these springs of God in his church, which they shall do three ways.

First, By the abolishing of corruption in regard of dominion; being purged from sin and from uncleanness by the blood of Christ: as the Corinthians were after their effectual calling, I Cor. vi. 11. '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.

Secondly, By becoming fruitful in grace and plentiful in good works, by the blessing of the Spirit

sanctifying the ministry of the word, as St Paul testified of the churches, I Cor. i. 5, 7. 'In everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge: so that ye come behind in no gift; Phil. i. 11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.' Col. i. 6, 10, 'Which (speaking of the gospel) is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' And as the Lord foreshewed in the vision of waters, Ezek. xlvii. 1, &c.

Thirdly, By joyful and cheerful going on in their holy profession; as the apostle commandeth, Phil. iv. 4, 'Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.' 'For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus,' chap. iii. 3.

For comfort, this makes greatly to the true members of the church in the sorest distresses that can befall them.

First, Doth the sense of corruption and guilt of transgression make thee ugly in thine own sight? Go to the cleansing fountain and spring of Christ's blood, and with the hand of faith wash and cleanse thy sinful soul, and pray the Lord to wash thee thoroughly, as David did, Ps. li. 2; wherewith if thou join upright endeavour after reformation in practice, thou mayest rest assured that the blood of Jesus Christ shall cleanse thee from all thy sins, I John i. 7, 9.

Secondly, Doth the barrenness of thine heart in the want of grace make thee afraid? Then get thee to the sanctifying fountain of God's Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of grace; beg of God the good fruits of this Spirit in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, faith, &c. Remember who made Aaron's rod to bud, Num. xvii. 5, 8, and who can raise up children unto Abraham of stones, as Mat. iii. 9; to whom all things are possible, chap. xix. 36, and nothing is too hard, Jer. xxxii. 27.

Lastly, Doth heaviness and deadness of heart oppress thee? Then get thee to the Comforter, even to God in Christ by his Holy Spirit, who is the God of hope, that can fill thee with all joy in believing, Rom. xv. 13.



THE  
S A I N T S ' S A C R I F I C E :

OR,

A COMMENTARY ON PSALM CXVI.

WHICH IS

A GRATULATORY PSALM, FOR DELIVERANCE FROM DEADLY DISTRESS.

BY WILLIAM GOUGE, D.D.

EDINBURGH: JAMES NICHOL.  
LONDON: JAMES NISBET & CO. DUBLIN: G. HERBERT.

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M,DCCC,LXVIII.

[FOR MEMOIR OF DR GOUGE, SEE HIS COMMENTARY ON THE  
EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, VOL. I.—Ed.]



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

R O B E R T, L O R D R I C H,

BARON OF LEEZ AND EARL OF WARWICK.

SIR,—The last year, when the heavy hand of the righteous Lord lay upon this land and other parts of the Christian world, manifested by the three arrows of his anger, plague, famine, and sword, just cause was given to inquire after such means as might cure the wounds that were made by them, and move the Lord to withhold his hand from shooting abroad any more of them.

Upon inquiry there was found in God's word (the treasury wherein all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid<sup>1</sup>) fit remedies for all those maladies.

There we find, Num. xvi. 45, &c. that Moses and Aaron applied such a plaster for the plague as healed that disease; and that David (2 Sam. xxi. 1) took such a course for removing a famine as did the deed; and that the said Moses and Joshua (Exod. xvii. 8, &c.) in such a manner resisted an infesting enemy, as they became conquerors.

All these means have been set out in several treatises. Whether they were well used, and whether upon the right use of them the foresaid judgments have been removed or no, he that knoweth the grounds and reasons of all things that fall out best knoweth.

But certain it is that the three mentioned arrows have either been withheld and put up into the Lord's

quiver, or else shot out against the enemies of God's church.

Our land is healed of the pestilence.

Fat kine of plenty have devoured the lean kine of famine.

The professors of the reformed religion in France have peace and rest.

Most seasonable succour is afforded to the oppressed churches in Germany. They that first took up the sword have perished by the sword.

Thus the Lord hath turned our mourning into dancing, and put off our sackcloth, and girded us with gladness: to the end that our glory may sing praise to him, and not be silent.

What Christian heart is not affected herewith?

All that know your honour know how you stand affected to God's church. You count it your honour any way to honour her.

Witness your diligent frequenting her assemblies, and presenting yourself in her courts, your conscientious observance of all her ordinances, your good respect to her ministers, your faithful discharge of that trust which by the divine providence is committed to you for presenting faithful ministers to her people. Many humble petitions are in this respect daily put up at the throne of grace on your behalf. Many sacrifices of praise are offered up to the divine Majesty for you. Ministers and people bless you, and bless the Lord for you. So as your

<sup>1</sup> Thesaurus iste in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae absconditi, est Scriptura.—*Jerome, Comment. in Mat.* xiii. 1, 2.

administration of this service not only refresheth the souls of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God. He therefore that hath said it, will assuredly perform it. 'Them that honour me, will I honour.'

Neither is your entire affection so restrained to this flourishing part of the church whereof you are in special manner a particular member, but it is extended to her in every place.

Your endeavour hath not been wanting to the enlargement of her bounds.

You every way sympathise with her.

Her oppressions press heavy upon your soul.

Her deliverances revive your spirit.

In consideration hereof, the same hand that in the enemies' insultations over the oppressed churches presented to your honour, 'The Church's Conquest,' wherein were set out most sovereign means prescribed by God himself, and to good purpose practised by those that were therein guided by the

divine Spirit, for obtaining conquest and rest to the church; the same hand doth now present to the same patron, 'The Saint's Sacrifice,' wherein out of the fore-mentioned treasury of God's word divine directions are collected for rendering due praises to him who in due season delivereth his out of desperate distresses.

Accept, my good Lord, this testimony of that high esteem which he hath of your Lordship, who in regard of that respect you bear and shew to God himself, to his ministers and saints, humbly and heartily supplicateth the divine Majesty for all needful blessings ever to rest on your honour's person, on your honourable consort, on your noble offspring, on your whole family, and on all your affairs, and professeth to continue in God's court.

Your Honour's Remembrancer,

WILLIAM GOUGE.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE, RIGHT WORSHIPFUL, AND OTHER  
MY BELOVED PARISHIONERS,  
INHABITANTS OF BLACKFRIARS, LONDON,

SUFFICIENT GRACE HERE, PERFECT GLORY HEREAFTER.

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**R**IGHT HONOURABLE, Right Worshipful, Beloved,—How entirely my heart stands towards you, the Searcher of hearts knoweth; so also doth that spirit which is in me, but for manifestation hereof means must be used.

I am confident that you yourselves will bear me witness, that for these four and twenty years my outward conversation among you hath given some evidence of the entireness of my affection towards you.

That others may know what I know you know hereof—others, I say, both near and far off, even farther off than in person I am ever like to be, and that not only in this present age, so long as we shall remain knit together by so near and firm a bond of relation as pastor and people, but also in future ages, (if at least my published meditations shall come to future ages.) I have presented to you in special manner all the treatises that by me have been set out to the public view of all; and that on no by-respect to myself, at which I never had cause to aim; but only on that due respect I owe to you by virtue of the foresaid relation.

Yours I am; and I desire to shew myself yours every way that I can.

Concerning this present treatise, 'The Saint's Sacrifice,' I began to draw my meditations thereunto

upon that extraordinary and admirable, if not miraculous, removal of the plague which happened in the first year of our now sovereign lord King Charles. In the beginning, therefore, of this treatise, sec. 3, you may observe a particular application of the general doctrine of praising God, to that special instance of God's singular mercy in so speedy and so full a deliverance of us from so infectious and far-spreading sickness.

But the summer being then spent, and that vacation time gone, which is the only time that I can get free from such encumbrances as afford leisure little enough, if not too little for my public ministry, in the years following rumours of the church's desolations through the might and malice, insolency and cruelty of her enemies in Germany, France, and other places, were brought to our ears, as the doleful news of the loss of Job's cattle, servants, and children, one upon the neck of another. And in the year 1630 the plague so began again to increase as another great plague was feared. It hovered over the city all the summer and autumn of that year: there died thereof in London and in the parishes adjoining, 1317; and that year burials increased more than ordinary, 1783, besides the five that died in Whitefriars of the plague, and were reckoned in no parish.

Cambridge also was much infected with the sickness the same year, and sundry other great and populous towns in the country.

Corn also then rose to a very high rate, and so continued till harvest 1631.

These judgments so following one upon another, like wave upon wave, turned the course of my meditations from the gratulatory Psalm to such scriptures as afforded fit remedies for removing the foresaid judgments, and occasioned the treatises of 'God's Three Arrows.'

But that God who delighteth in mercy, and to whom judgment is a strange work, hath so removed all the foresaid judgments, that there is now as just occasion for publishing 'The Saint's Sacrifice,' as there was before of setting out 'God's Three Arrows.'

While the judgments lay heavy on us and others, instant and earnest prayer was made for the removal thereof. Now that our prayers are heard, should we not return what he requires that hath granted our desires?<sup>1</sup> If thou be ungrateful, having what thou wilt, well mayest thou be what thou wilt not.

To stir up mine own soul and the souls of others to endeavour with our uttermost power to render to him who hath been so gracious to us that which is most due, all possible praise; and to stir us up to con-

<sup>1</sup> Si ingratus es in eo quod esse vis, iure cogeris esse quod non vis.—*Aug. de lib. Arbitr.*, lib. iii. cap. 6.

time our humble and hearty devotions to the high, mighty, wise, and merciful Lord for continuing his favour to his churches, and for establishing perpetual peace and rest to them, this 'Saint's Sacrifice' is here published. Whereunto I was in a private and a particular respect the rather moved, by reason of a more than ordinary recovery which the Lord was pleased to vouchsafe to his poor and unworthy servant in August 1630, who hath in regard of the dangerous disease and unexpected recovery cause to say, 'The sorrows of death compassed me, but it was the Lord's pleasure to deliver me.'

O my parishoners and other people of God, let us meditate ourselves alone, and confer one with another, about the gracious and wondrous works of the Lord in these our days, and whet one another's spirits, and incite our souls to praise the Lord, that it may never repent him of any kindness that he hath shewed, or yet further intendeth to us. Praise the Lord, O ye his saints. Let this sacrifice of saints be daily offered up by you in particular, together with

The builder up of your souls,

WILLIAM GOUGE.

BLACKFRIARS, LONDON, 14th Feb. 1631.

# THE SAINT'S SACRIFICE;

OR,

## A COMMENTARY ON PSALM CXVI.

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Sec. 1. *Of the author, occasion, and matter of the Psalm.*

THIS psalm is a gratulatory psalm. Therein the psalmist giveth solemn thanks to God, for a great deliverance from a deadly danger.

By the kind of danger and deliverance, it may be supposed that David was the inditer of this psalm: and that the danger and deliverance wherunto he hath relation, are those that are recorded to be in the reign of Saul, who persecuted David even unto death. Oft did that wrathful king, when David was before him, cast his javelin at him to stick him therewith even to the wall, and many other ways did attempt to take away his life; as, by sending him out against the Philistines, by requiring a hundred foreskins of the Philistines in lieu of dowry, by speaking to his son and servants to kill him, by sending messengers unto his house, there to watch him and slay him; by commanding his servants to bring him in his bed, when it was told that he was sick; by sending messengers again and again to apprehend him, and following after him himself to the company of prophets: by raising an army against him, and pursuing him to Keilah, and from thence to Maon, and so to Engedi, and to Ziph, where he heard that David abode.

By reason of these persecutions he might well say, as is here recorded, ver. 3, 'The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.' And by reason of the many deliverances which the Lord gave him, (for it is expressly recorded that 'God delivered not David into Saul's hands,' 1 Sam. xxiii. 14: meaning thereby, that God by his divine providence delivered David out of Saul's hands, and preserved him from death, which Saul intended against him,) by reason hereof David might well say to God, as ver. 8, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death,' &c. So as it is very probable that David upon the foresaid deliverances penned this psalm; yea, the agreement of this psalm both in the general matter, and also in sundry words and phrases with the 18th psalm, which is expressly said to be made by 'David in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of Saul,' doth make it more than probable, that the same deliverances moved the same author to pen this psalm also.

*Object.* Jerusalem was not built in Saul's time,<sup>1</sup> whereof notwithstanding mention is made in the

<sup>1</sup> In fine mentio fit urbis Hierosolymæ, quæ tempore Saulis nondum condita fuit.—*Moller. Arg. in hunc Ps.*

last verse of this psalm. Yea, the courts of the Lord's house are said to be in the midst of Jerusalem, where neither the ark nor the tabernacle were in Saul's time. Therefore deliverances from those dangers were not the occasion of this psalm.

*Ans.* 1. Frequent mention is made of Jerusalem before Saul's time, so as it was then built.

2. This psalm might be penned many years after those deliverances, and yet they give occasion thereto.

But because the Holy Ghost hath not by name noted the penman, nor expressed the particular danger and deliverance, I will omit all probable conjectures, and insist on such general truths as may and must, without all contradiction or question, be received.

Those general truths are these :—

1. A prophet immediately inspired and infallibly assisted by the Holy Ghost was the author of this psalm. For 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,' 2 Tim. iii. 16. And '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,' 2 Pet. i. 21.

2. The penman of this psalm had been in very great danger, even near to death, ver. 3, 6, 8.

3. In his danger he called upon God for help, ver. 4.

4. He was delivered out of all his dangers, ver. 6, 7.

5. He acknowledgeth his deliverances to be from God, ver. 2, 8, 16.

6. He professeth God's grace to be the ground thereof, ver. 5, 16.

7. For the present he testifieth his true and hearty affection to God, ver. 1.

8. For afterwards he promiseth to walk worthy of the Lord, ver. 9, &c.

9. He is careful to perform what he vowed in his distress, ver. 14, 18.

10. He humbly acknowledgeth his weakness, ver. 10, 11.

11. He is ready to do what he may know to be acceptable unto God, ver. 12.

12. He faileth not to offer up praise to God, ver. 13, 17, 19.

13. His manner of praising God is most solemn, ver. 18, 19.

14. He stirs up others also to praise the Lord, ver. 19.

Other particular points are here and there inserted; but they are such as may be brought to one of the forenamed heads.

*Sec. 2. Of the resolution of the psalm.*

The sum of this psalm is,—A gratulation for deliverance from deadly danger.

The parts thereof are two :—

I. A declaration of the author's present affection.

II. A protestation for his after-purpose.

In the former he noteth—

1. How he was affected to God.

2. How God respected him.

His affection to God is expressed in the first clause, *I love*.

God's respect to him is more largely set out in the words following to the 7th verse.

For, 1. It is generally propounded in the latter part of the 1st verse, and in the 2d verse, and then particularly exemplified in the four following verses.

In the general he noteth two points :—

1. How God's kindness to him was manifested,—namely, by hearing his prayer.

2. What use he made thereof: surely this, to 'continue to call upon God,' ver. 2.

In the particular exemplification he expresseth these four points :—

1. The danger wherein he was, ver. 3.

2. The means which he used for deliverance, ver. 4.

3. The cause whereby God was moved to help him, ver. 5.

4. The deliverance which God gave him, ver. 6.

II. His protestation for his after-purpose hath respect—

1. To his inward disposition.

2. To his outward conversation.

In regard of his inward disposition, he professeth a quiet settling of his mind, so as it shall not be distracted with doubts and fears. Wherein we may note—

1. His manner of expressing it, with a double apostrophe, one to his own soul, ver. 7, the other to God, ver. 8.

2. The ground or reason thereof: and that, 1. Generally propounded, ver. 7; 2. Particularly expounded, ver. 8.

In regard of his outward conversation, he professeth two points—

One, more general, to 'walk before the Lord,' ver. 9.

The other, more particular, to 'praise the Lord,' ver. 12, &c.

Betwixt these he inserteth a digression, which containeth a manifestation of his faith, ver. 10; of his fear, ver. 11.

The other more particular duty of praising God is more largely insisted upon: for it is set down—

1. By way of profession in relation to himself.

2. By way of provocation in relation to others.

His profession is, 1. Propounded; 2. Repeated.

In his first propounding of it we must observe—

1. The manner of expressing it.

2. The matter whereof it consisteth.

3. The motives to press it.

That manner is by a rhetorical communication, ver. 12.

The matter is public praise, ver. 13.

The motives which he useth to press the duty of praise are especially four—

1. His own voluntary bond, his vow, ver. 14.

2. God's high account of him, and of such as he was, ver. 15.

3. The relation that was betwixt God and him, ver. 16.

4. The kindness which God had done to him: 'Thou hast loosed my bonds.'

The repetition of the duty, and of some of the motives, is set down, ver. 17, 18, and amplified by a description of the place where it should be performed, ver. 19.

His provocation of others to perform the duty is in the last words of the psalm: 'Praise ye the Lord.'

Sec. 3. *Of solemn thanks to God for great deliverances.*<sup>1</sup>

The general sum and main scope of this psalm giveth us this instruction—

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God' for directions about solemn thanksgiving, treat. iii. sec. 73.

More than ordinary praise is to be given to God for more than ordinary deliverances.<sup>1</sup> The distress and danger whereof mention is made in this psalm appeareth to be so deadly and desperate, as the deliverance from it must needs be more than ordinary, even almost, if not altogether, miraculous. The prophet therefore contenteth not himself with a sudden ejaculation of his heart; nor with a secret form of praise betwixt God and his own soul; nor with a more open manner of performing this duty in a private family, or among a few saints; but after a more solemn and public manner he performeth it: ver. 18, 19, 'Even in the presence of all the Lord's people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of Jerusalem;' and not only so, but also he publisheth as much to all the world, and penneth this psalm to remain as a record thereof to all posterity. We have not only this, and many other like patterns of other saints, guided herein by the Spirit of God, for solemn, public, registered, and other ways, extraordinary forms and manner of praising God on like occasions, but also express precepts of God to that purpose. The 136th Psalm was penned for this very end, to be a recorded public form of praising the Lord for great deliverances: and therefore it was appointed by Jehoshaphat, that good king of Judah, to be sung after that Jahaziel, stirred up by the Spirit of the Lord, had assured them, in the name of the Lord, that they should be delivered from their enemies, 2 Chron. xx. 21.

This extraordinary manner of praising God on extraordinary occasions is an especial part of 'walking worthy of the Lord.' It argueth our mind towards him to be answerable to his mind towards us; our readiness to bless him agreeable to his forwardness to bless us.<sup>2</sup> Such a disposition is wonderfully well pleasing to him, making him much to rejoice in the deliverances which he giveth, and blessings which he bestoweth, and never to repent any kindness that he doth, whether ordinary or extraordinary. For the Holy Spirit is given to saints that they should

<sup>1</sup> Ut hic psalmista, sic publicè pro bonis sibi collatis gratias Deo agit.—*Aug. Confess.*, lib. i. cap. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Spiritus sanctus sanctis datur, ut copulentur Deo in laudibus glorie ipsius; non quod Deus laude alicujus indigeat, sed quod laus Dei laudatoribus prosit.—*Jerome Comment.* lib. i. in Eph. i.

be knit to God in the praises of his glory; not that God needeth the praise of any, but that the praise of God might profit them that praise him. We are God's soil; all manner of good things, positive or privative, which in any kind he bestoweth on us, are his seed. Gratefulness is the crop which he expecteth of his seed; for by what more sacred sacrifice can God be honoured than by thanks? As the husbandman is affected with a plentiful harvest answerable to his much tillage and seed, so the Lord with correspondent gratitude.<sup>1</sup>

Behold here a good ground for justification of this day's solemnity. The occasion thereof is apparently more than ordinary; for as the judgment was much more lamentable than the like judgments have been in former ages, so the deliverance much more admirable. That pestilential sickness wherewith this city, and other parts of this land, were visited in the first year of King James, A.D. 1603, so exceeded all former visitations in the like kind, as it was called the Great Plague. For where in the year of the Lord 1562 there died of the plague 20,136, and 25,886 in the year 1593; in the foresaid first year of King James there died 38,244. But this year<sup>2</sup> there died 54,265 in London, and the liberties thereof, and the nine out-parishes that are in the suburbs. In Westminster then died 2540. In the five parishes that are round about London,<sup>3</sup> within a mile or two, 6196. The total of all are threescore three thousand and one. If the number of those who died in other places somewhat more remote from London were added herunto, it would be found to exceed the number of threescore and ten thousand that in David's time died of the plague. Indeed, the time wherein those threescore and ten thousand died was much shorter, which made the plague the more fearful for that time. But that fear was thereby the sooner removed, in that within the space of three days the plague was stayed, and infected no longer. But with us for the space of three months it increased very hotly; some weeks<sup>4</sup> almost a thousand increased, so as thus week after week it

did more and more affright the hearts of men, till it amounted to the number<sup>1</sup> of 5205 in one week. Thus we see how terrible the judgment was. The manner of removing it was as admirable. For where it was increasing nine months, from November to August, it so decreased as within the space of seven months it came to nothing. For in the weekly bills that were given up the 8th of March 1625, not one was given up to be dead of the plague. And so fast it decreased as there died one week 944 less, and another 1009 less than the week immediately before, whereas the greatest increase that ever was in one week was 934. In the time of that raging pestilence pity and mercy was earnestly craved, and that also extraordinarily by fasting and prayer, whereunto the Lord without all question had respect. Should not now answerable thanks be given to God for a deliverance so free, so full, so speedy, from a distress so dangerous, so deadly, so fearful as this plague was? Who could have expected such a deliverance? Now we being above hope, beyond expectation, thus admirably delivered, shall not more than ordinary praise be given to him that hath delivered us? This day<sup>2</sup> is prudently and piously deputed by public authority to this very purpose. Let us rejoice and be glad therein. Let our rejoicing and gladness be spiritual in giving praises to the Lord. Rouse up your spirits to a hearty zealous performance of this duty. This is one end why we have been delivered out of the jaws of that devouring beast, the destroying pestilence. 'For the grave cannot praise the Lord, death cannot celebrate him,' Isa. xxxviii. 18. How many of our brethren and sisters that are gone down into the pit, if they were still living, would make the churches of God to ring again with God's praises! They being taken away, we that remain ought with the utmost of our power to perform this duty. 'The living, they shall praise the Lord,' Isa. xxxviii. 19. Let us answerably to the occasion do it; yea, so do it as others, even our posterity, may by our pattern be directed and incited on any like occasion to do the like. 'The father

<sup>1</sup> Quid est sacratius laudis sacrificium, quam in actione gratiarum?—*Aug. contr. adversar. Leg.* lib. i. cap. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Caroli, 1625.

<sup>3</sup> Lambeth, Newington, Stepney, Hackney, Islington.

<sup>4</sup> July 28, 3583; August 4, 4517.

<sup>1</sup> August 18, 1625.

<sup>2</sup> The 29th of January, 1 Caroli, 1625, being the Lord's day, was by proclamation enjoined to be celebrated with solemn thanksgiving in London and the places adjacent, and the 19th of February following in other parts of the kingdom.



to the children shall make known thy truth, O Lord.'

This of the main scope of this psalm.

Sec. 4. *Of love; what it is when good.*

Ver. I. *I love.*

The first part<sup>1</sup> of this psalm is a declaration of the prophet's affection. Therein is shewed how he was afflicted to God, and how God respected him. The former is an effect of the latter, the latter a cause of the former. The effect is premised as a bounden duty, 'I love.' The cause (though in order of time and nature the first) is inferred as a reason to shew the equity of that duty, 'because he hath heard.' &c.

In the former consider we,

1. The prophet's affection.
2. His expression thereof.

The affection is love.

Love is a liking, uniting affection.

1. In the general nature of it love is an affection.

2. In relation to the different kinds of affections it is a liking one.

3. In the essential form of it, it is uniting.

1. Affections are simply in their general nature, nor virtues, nor vices.<sup>2</sup> For a virtue cannot be perverted and made evil. It would then lose the very nature of virtue. Nor can a vice be rectified and made good. It also would therein lose its nature and be no vice. Affections are as they are well or ill used. If well used, good; and so become as virtues. If ill used, bad; and so made like vices. Yet whether well or ill used, they retain the general nature of affections. Love well ordered is love, and love ill ordered is love. Therefore is love, in regard of the different ordering of it, both commanded and forbidden.<sup>3</sup> So other affections. They are therefore good servants, but bad masters. If as servants they be kept within compass, they will be of singular good use; but if they rule as masters, they will prove young masters—like untutored heirs whose parents are dead, and so have all in their own hands,

and soon make havoc of all. They are in the soul as bellows; where fire is kindled they soon blow it up to a flame. Or rather they are in themselves as fire, hot and violent. Fire, if well used, is very useful; if ill, very hurtful.<sup>1</sup> So affections; so among other affections, love. And this is the general nature of love.

2. Affections are liking, disliking.

Liking are such as have for their object that which is in truth or in appearance good.<sup>2</sup>

Disliking are such as have for their object that which is indeed evil, or seems so to be. For good things are liked, but evil disliked. And if things which are in truth good seem evil, as evil, they are disliked; and evil, if they appear good, liked.

Liking affections are desire, love, joy, &c. Disliking, fear, hatred, anger, grief, &c. Thus we see in what kind of affections love is ranked.

3. That whereby love is differenced from other liking affections is a uniting efficacy. For love knitteth the heart that loveth to the object loved.<sup>3</sup>

Instance the love which Jonathan had to David, which the Holy Ghost thus setteth out, 'The soul of Jonathan loved him as his own soul,' 1 Sam. xviii. 1. This apostolical phrase, 'knit together in love,' Col. ii. 2, proveth as much. In this respect love is styled a bond; yea, a bond of perfectness, whereby things are close knit and fast bound, Col. iii. 14.

As other affections, so love becomes good or evil by the object whereon it is placed, and by ordering it thereon.

Love is evil when it is placed on an evil object, or not well ordered on a good object; but good when it is placed on that which is good indeed, and well ordered. The world to worldly minds seemeth good, but in truth it is not good; therefore 'love not the world,' 1 John ii. 15. Jehoshaphat is reproved for 'loving them that hated the Lord,' 2 Chron. xix. 2. As to dislike and hate good, so to like and love evil, is evil.

<sup>1</sup> Igne quid utilius? si quis tamen urere tecta, &c.—*Ovid. Trist.*, lib. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Passio enim velut duces sunt delectatio et dolor.—*Amb. de Jacob.*, lib. i. cap. 2

<sup>3</sup> Quid est amor, nisi quedam vita duo aliqua copulans, vel copulare appetens, amantem scilicet, et quod amat.—*Avg. de Trin.*, lib. viii. cap. 10.

<sup>1</sup> See sec. 2.

<sup>2</sup> πᾶθη οὐκ ἐστὶν ἀί ἀρεταί, οἷθ' αἱ κακία, ὅτι οὐ λεγόμεθα κατὰ τὰ πάθη, σπουδαῖος ἢ φαῦλος.—*Arist. Ethic.*, lib. ii. cap. 5.

<sup>3</sup> See on ver. 11, sec. 63. See 'A Plaster for the Plague,' sec. 43.

*Object.* Christ commandeth to love enemies.

*Ans.* By distinguishing betwixt their persons and qualities we may discern a double object.

1. Their person, which is good, that may be loved.

2. Their evil quality, that may and must be hated.

For well ordering love, being placed on a right object, a mean must be kept betwixt two extremes—one of defect, the other of excess.

Love faileth in the defect when it is not according to the utmost of its ability extended, answerable to the excellency of the object whereupon it is set. I say the utmost of its ability, because there are some objects so transcendently excellent as no love can be correspondent to them. It is enough in such cases that love be stretched to its utmost extent. The law requires no more where it saith, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might;' and again, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18.

Love offendeth in the excess<sup>1</sup> when it is so placed on an inferior object, as it is withdrawn (at least in some degree) from a more excellent object; as when father, mother, son, or daughter is loved more than Christ, Mat. x. 17. Eli therefore is justly punished for honouring (a testimony of love) his sons above God, 1 Sam. ii. 29, 30.

Sec. 5. *Of the prophet's expression of his affection to God.*

2. The expression of the prophet's affection is in this short abrupt phrase, 'I love,' which is but one word in the original, and expressed as a full and entire sentence in itself, thus—'I love, because the Lord hath heard,' &c. Most translators so turn it, as if, by a trajection, or passing of a word from one sentence to another, this title Lord were to be joined with the first clause, thus—(יהוה אהבתי כי שמעני), 'I love the Lord, because he hath heard,' &c. I deny not but that thus the sense is made somewhat the more perspicuous, and the words run the more roundly; yet are they not altogether so emphatical. For when a man's heart is inflamed, and his soul

ravished with a deep apprehension of some great and extraordinary favour, his affection will cause interruption in the expression thereof, and make stops in his speech; so as this concise and abrupt clause, 'I love,' declareth a more entire and ardent affection than a more full and round phrase would do. Great is the force of true love, so as it cannot be sufficiently expressed.<sup>1</sup>

*Object.* How shall the object of his love be known by this abrupt speech?

*Ans.* The express mention of the person loved in the reason following doth sufficiently demonstrate the object of his love; for who will not infer upon the reason following the protestation thus, 'I love, because the Lord hath heard my voice,' that it is the Lord who is loved?

Seeing, therefore, that the words, as they stand in the original, may have so useful a construction, I see no cause of altering them. Many ancient and later expositors so take it.<sup>2</sup>

The mention of the prophet's affection sheweth that,

I. *God is to be loved.*

The manner of expressing it so concisely and abruptly declareth that,

II. *Our love of God must be most ardent.*

The prefixing of this his affection before his declaration of God's kindness to him, and that too as a bounden duty arising from thence, teacheth that,

III. *A due consideration of God's kindness to man, works an ardent affection in man towards God.*

Sec. 6. *Of love due to God.*

I. *God is to be loved.* He knows not God, he knows not the nature and end of love, that denieth the truth of this position. Both law and gospel require it. 'Thou shalt love the Lord,' Deut. vi. 5, saith the law. 'This is the first and great commandment,' Mat. xxii. 38, saith he that was both the giver of the law, and author of the gospel. Yea, the heathen<sup>3</sup> by that glimmering light which they had of God, saw the equity thereof.

<sup>1</sup> Grandem vim obtinet vera dilectio.—*Jerome ad Celant.*

<sup>2</sup> Sic Augustinus, sic Hieronymus, sic alii veteres et neo-terici.

<sup>3</sup> Cic. de Divin.

<sup>1</sup> Non frater, non filius, non amicus, non omnis affectus amoris Domini preponatur.—*Jerome, lib. iii.; Comment in Mat. xviii.*

1. Love is the ground of all the duties that are acceptably performed to God. In which respect the law, Exod. xx. 6, premiseth love before keeping the commandments; and compriseth all the commandments under it, Luke x. 27. And the apostle expressly saith, that 'Love is the fulfilling of the law,' Rom. xiii. 10. As love of man is the fulfilling of the second table, so love of God is the fulfilling of the first table.<sup>1</sup> Had not corruption so infected and perverted man as it hath, there would need no other motive to provoke him to any duty than love. Where love abounds, there will be much willingness, cheerfulness, forwardness, and readiness to do what can be done to the well-pleasing of him that is loved. Instance the disposition of wives, children, servants, subjects, friends, and others, whose heart is possessed and filled with true love.

2. All things that make one fit or worthy to be loved, are in God, as,

(1.) Surpassing excellency, majesty, and glory. In these and other like respects we love God for himself.<sup>2</sup>

(2.) High sovereignty, and supreme authority over us.

(3.) All manner of relations whereby one is knit to another; for he is our king, our father, our husband, our master, our friend, Ps. xlviii. 6, 7; Isa. lxiii. 16; Jer. xxxi. 32; Mal. i. 6; Cant. v. 1.

(4.) Free grace, rich mercy, abundance of all manner of blessings and good things that may any way be needful to us.

3. Gratefulness in regard of the many good things which we have received from him, requireth all love.<sup>3</sup> By him we are what we are; and every good thing that in any kind we have, we have received from him. But who can reckon up and set in order all the good things which from God we have received?

What now may be thought of such as hate God? How impious, how perverse a disposition have they! That there have been such, is evident by that fear-

<sup>1</sup> Soli Deo honor et gloria; sed horum neutrum acceptabit Deus, si nulle amoris condita non fuerint.—*Bern. super. Cant. Scrm.* 83.

<sup>2</sup> Deum diligimus propter semetipsam.—*Aug. Probat. Epist.* 12.

<sup>3</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part 2, sec. 63, &c.

ful commination that is denounced against them in the second commandment, and in sundry other places. Such a one was Ahab; such were the Gentiles that believed not; such are all that hate Christ. In this respect they are worthy to be hated with a perfect hatred. Such as love God will so hate them; for God himself hates them. Whereupon it is noted that he will rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest upon them. What else can they expect from the Lord, that hate him?

So far be our souls from any such diabolical disposition of hating God, as that rather we make him the object of our love; and for that end oft and duly weigh how worthy he is of our love; what a prerogative it is to have such an excellent object to cast our love upon; and what benefit redoundeth to us by loving him. For assuredly no love shall be lost that is cast upon him. He knows who love him, he approves them, and will love them again; and what may not they expect from him that are loved of him? 'God keepeth mercy for them that love him,' Neh. i. 5; and not for them only, but for thousands of their generations after them; whereupon the psalmist thus prayeth to God, 'Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name,' Ps. cxix. 132. The many many favours which God here bestoweth upon them that love him, and reserveth for them hereafter, cannot by the tongue of men or angels be expressed. 'All things work together for good to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28. 'The crown of life, the kingdom of heaven, is promised to them that love God,' James i. 12, and ii. 5. '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,' I Cor. ii. 9. Who now would not, who should not love God?<sup>1</sup> Impious he is against God, injurious against himself, who setteth not his heart upon God, and maketh him the object of his love. Without love all other affections are as nothing. Fear and hon-

<sup>1</sup> Absque amore et timor penam habet, et honor non habet gratiam. Servus est timor quando in ab amore non manumittitur. Et qui de amore non venit honor, non honor sed adulatio est. Amor per se sufficit, per se placet, et propter se, &c.—*Bern. super. Cant. Scrm.* 83.

our are due to God, Mal. i. 6. But fear without love hath torment. Honour without love hath no grace, is not acceptable. Such fear is servitude, such honour is flattery. But love is sufficient of itself; through itself, and for itself it pleaseth, and is accepted. To shew how far our heart should be extended hereunto, note the next doctrine.

Sec. 7. *Of the ardency of our love of God.*

II. *Our love of God must be most ardent*, such as may fill our heart with a holy admiration, and even ravish it again; as this prophet was so ravished therewith, as in mention thereof he was at a stand and stop. I love, saith he, a phrase of an entire and earnest lover. The law that setteth these large limits thereto (with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might) requireth as much.

So excellent an object he is, so worthy of all love, so many, so great his kindnesses to us, as it is not possible for us sufficiently, or answerably to love him. Therefore in the highest degree that can be must he be loved. They that aim at the sun, which they cannot possibly hit, will put to all their strength, draw as far, and shoot as high as possibly they can.

Such therefore as see just cause to love God, and are persuaded so to do, let them never satisfy themselves in what they do in this kind. But when they have testified as much as they can, know that they have come much short of that love which is meet for such an object; and therefore still prick on their souls to go further and further. And on this ground take we heed that we suffer not our love so to be set on any other object whatsoever, as that thereby our love should be any whit drawn from God. Note the doom which Christ in this case hath given: 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me,' Mat. x. 37. Whether our love be an ascending love, up to father or mother, or a descending love, down to son or daughter, it may not be greater than our love of Christ. Nay, our love of all others, in comparison of our love of Christ, must be hatred. Therefore he saith, '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,' Luke xiv. 26. Rather than

not love Christ, (if the case so stand that they must be hated, or Christ not loved,) they must be hated.<sup>1</sup>

And when we love them, our love of them, in comparison of our love of Christ, must be hatred: as the light of a candle, compared to the light of the sun, is darkness. Take heed therefore of lukewarmness in loving Christ. Such love makes Christ to spue men out of his mouth, as he threatened Laodicea, Rev. iii. 16. Take heed of leaving thy first love, Rev. ii. 4. Let thy love of God daily increase, as the cedars of Lebanon, till they come to be the tallest of trees.

For a help herein note the next point.

Sec. 8. *Of considering God's kindness to inflame our love of him.*

III. *A due consideration of God's kindness to man works an ardent affection in man towards God.* The large expression of God's care over this prophet in the verses following doth demonstrate his due consideration thereof. This pathetic speech, 'I love,' importeth his ardent affection. That which is here in one word thus concisely implied, is in Ps. xviii. with much variety of words expressed; and by the penitent woman that washed the Lord's feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair, in many actions so evidently declared, as thereupon the Lord gave of her this testimony, 'She loved much,' Luke vii. 37, &c. He that is perfectly loved claimeth and challengeth to himself the whole will of him that loveth him. Nothing hath a greater command than love.<sup>2</sup> Besides, God's kindness hath an operative virtue in it, which much affecteth those that seriously fix their mind thereon, as fire heateth such as stand near thereto. Indeed we have of ourselves no heat of love in us to God-wards; yet as cold iron put into the fire may thereby be made red hot, so we, by much meditation on the kindness and providence of God towards us, whereby we are as it were cast into the fire of God's love, may be red hot with love, and inflamed in our affection toward God, as he hath here said, 'I love;' and

<sup>1</sup> Si necessitas fuerit, ut amor parentum, ac filiorum, Dei amori comparatur, et non possit uterque servari, odium in suos pietas in Deum.—*Jerome Comment.*, lib. i. in Mat. x.

<sup>2</sup> Qui perfecte amat, totam sibi vindicat amantis voluntatem. Nihil est imperiosius charitate.—*Jerome ad Galat.*

again, 'I will love thee dearly, O Lord,' Ps. xviii. 1.

The word whereby the psalmist expresseth his entire affection in the noun signifieth a womb, and importeth such an affection as cometh from the innermost part of man, (כסך matrix,) from his bowels, from the bottom of his heart, as we speak. It is therefore oft put for such pity and compassion as moveth the bowels, as we shall after shew (sec. 26) on the fifth verse. Some therefore thus translate that phrase, 'From my innermost bowels will I love thee, O Lord.'<sup>1</sup> To give evidence of his entire and ardent love of God, he oft professeth his wonderful great love to God's commandments, whereof he saith with admiration, 'Oh how love I thy law! I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. I love them exceedingly,' Ps. cxix. 97, 127, 167; therefore he saith to God, 'Consider how I love thy precepts,' ver. 159.

This entire and ardent love of God will give good demonstration of that notice which we take of God's merciful dealing with us, and of the heed which we give to his tender care over us. If no heat of love be wrought in our hearts, after that God hath dealt graciously with us, surely no regard hath been had thereto. If the heat that is wrought be but little, though there hath been some regard, yet that some hath been very slight. Let us hereby make trial of ourselves. We have all cause to say, as the prophet here doth, 'The Lord hath heard my supplication.' For when the plague rag'd among us, when thousands fell on the one and other side, when sorrows of death compassed us, then called we upon the name of the Lord. With fasting we humbled our souls week after week before the Lord, and oft we said, 'O Lord, we beseech thee, deliver our souls;' and the gracious Lord inclined his ear to us; he delivered our soul from death, our eyes from tears, our feet from falling. Can we now every one in truth say, 'I love'! With our tongues we may utter this word, being put into our mouths; but if our hearts were thoroughly sifted, I am afraid that most of them would be found to be otherwise affected. It hath been shewed that love knitteth one's hearts to the object loved. Are our hearts

knit to God? our spirits to his Spirit? If they were, we should more mind the things of God than we do; our care to please God, our fear of offending him, would be more than it is. For these are two especial properties of a child, that, in relation to his father, can in truth say, 'I love.' What from these premises can be inferred but that we have not so duly and deeply considered God's gracious dealing with us as we should have done?

Let us therefore for the time to come take notice of this our over-careless neglect; that, being humbled for what is past, we may yet by recalling to mind, and deeply meditating on the great and gracious deliverance which the Lord hath given us from the snares and sorrows of death, the remembrance whereof is yet fresh among us, be so affected therewith, as, with such a heart and tongue as the prophet here did, every one say, 'I love;' and give evidence thereof by breaking through and passing over all things that may draw our hearts from God. Love of God easily breaketh all bonds.<sup>1</sup>

Hitherto of the prophet's respect to God, God's respect to him followeth.

#### Sec. 9. Of God's hearing prayer.

God's respect to the prophet is<sup>2</sup> generally expounded in these words:—

1. Because the Lord hath heard my voice and my supplications.

2. Because he hath inclined his ear to me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

In this general declaration of God's kindness to him, he sheweth—

1. How it was manifested.

2. What use he made thereof.

It was manifested by God's hearing his prayer. And to shew that this was no small kindness, he setteth it out with much copy<sup>3</sup> of words and variety of phrase.

His prayer is expressed in two words—voice, supplication.

The former noteth his outward expression.

The latter his inward intention.

<sup>1</sup> Facile rumpit hæc vincula amor Dei.—*Jerome ad Hiodor., De Vita Ercenit.*

<sup>2</sup> See sec. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Qu., 'copious,' or 'copiousness?'—*Ed.*

<sup>1</sup> Ex intimis visceribus diligam te Jehovah.—*Trem. et Jun. in Ps. xviii. 2.*

Here, then, is a warrant for vocal and mental prayer.<sup>1</sup>

Vocal is first expressed, because it is best discerned; but mental is added, to shew that his voice came out of his heart.

God's granting his desire is also expressed in two phrases.—1. He heard; 2. He inclined his ear.

Both of these are metaphorically, by way of resemblance, attributed to God after the manner of man.<sup>2</sup>

The former declareth the ground of God's granting his request, He heard his voice.

The latter noteth the manner of doing it, He inclined his ear to him. As one willing to do him good, he purposely bowed his ear, he hearkened to his petition.

Now to shew that this readiness of God to hear him was an especial kindness, and deserved all love and respect, he inferreth this evidence of God's love to him as the cause of his love to God, by a causal particle, thus, 'I love, *because* the Lord hath heard my voice.'

From this text thus unfolded five distinct observations do naturally arise.

I. Man's desire is to be uttered to God.

The word *voice* importeth as much.

II. What is outwardly uttered must be inwardly intended before God. For this end, unto voice is added *supplication*.

III. The Lord heareth prayer.

This is expressly set down.

IV. The Lord is ready and forward to hearken to that which his saints pray for. The metaphor of inclining his ear implieth thus much.

V. It is a great kindness in God to hear prayer. This is a main point here intended.<sup>3</sup>

#### Sec. 10. *Of voice in prayer.*

1. *Man's desire is to be uttered to God.* The frequent mention of voice, words, call, cry, mouth, lips, with the like, in relation to prayer, (which are

<sup>1</sup> Of these two kinds of prayer, see 'The Whole Armour of God,' Treat. 3, sec. 74, 75, on Eph. vi. 18.

<sup>2</sup> ἀνθρωπίνως.

<sup>3</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' Treat. 3, sec. 75, on Eph. vi. 18.

all evidences of uttering man's desire.) is a pregnant proof of the point.

Though to God, who knoweth the thought of our heart, it be not necessary to have our desire opened, yet, for manifesting to ourselves and others the truth of our desire, and for adding more force to our inward devotion, an outward expression thereof is necessary; for, as the beams of the sun wax hotter by reflection, so the desire of the heart by expression. Justly, therefore, is his prayer rejected who thinketh much to cry unto the Lord, and thereby to manifest the ardency of his desire.<sup>1</sup>

They, therefore, that content themselves with inward ejaculations of their spirit to God, and with devout thoughts and meditations which are in their kind commendable, fail in an especial means which God hath sanctified to make prayers the more forcible to our own souls, more profitable to others that hear them, and more acceptable to God, who delights to have the outward parts of our body as well as the inward powers of our soul used in his worship. Thus shall that which we do be more public and more solemn, for what is that which the psalmist saith? 'I cried with my mouth, and I rejoiced with my tongue;' but thus much, 'I did not openly and publicly that which I did.'<sup>2</sup> But that no countenance may hereby be given to such as draw nigh to God with their mouth and honour him with their lips, when their heart is far from him,<sup>3</sup> let the next doctrine be duly observed.

#### Sec. 11. *Of voice and heart together in prayer.*<sup>3</sup>

II. *If not is outwardly uttered must be inwardly intended before God.*<sup>4</sup> It is therefore usual with the

<sup>1</sup> Merito non exauditur qui clamare dissimulat.—*Bern. in Ps. Qui habitat, &c., Ser. xvi.*

<sup>2</sup> Quid est clamavi ore meo et exultavi sub lingua mea? Ipsum publicè prælicavi.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. lxxv.*

<sup>3</sup> The word תְּהַנִּיחַ, translated supplications, is derived from הִנִּיחַ, which signifieth an inward passion or affection of the soul, so as תְּהַנִּיחַ, supplications, may fitly be applied to the inward devotions of the soul, and so much the rather, because this latter, supplications, is added to the former, voice, as the fountain whence it cometh, and importeth as much as if it had been thus expressed, קוֹל תְּהַנִּיחַ, the voice of my supplications, as it is Ps. xxviii. 2, 6; xxxi. 22; lxxxvi. 6; cxxx. 2; and cxl. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Laudate totis votis de totis vobis, id est ut non solum

Holy Ghost to join such words together as import the one and the other, both outward expressions and inward intention, as 'words and meditation,' 'words of mouth, and meditation of heart,' 'heart and tongue,' 'lips and soul,' 'lips not feigned,' 'heart and hands,' 'soul and eyes.'

The Lord, whose incommunicable property it is to 'search the heart,' hath his eye especially on it, and accordingly doth accept or reject such things as are outwardly done by men. He professeth as much of himself, saying, 'I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways,' Jer. xvii. 10. The true affection of the heart maketh prayers to be sincere, and such prayers are said to be offered up by Christians who have respect to God;<sup>1</sup> if, therefore, he hear anything uttered with the mouth which he finds not intended in the heart, he regards it no more than he did the sacrifice of Cain, Gen. iv. 5. God is a spirit, and it is necessary that whosoever desireth to have his cry come unto God, do cry in spirit as well as in voice; for, as God regardeth not the face of man as man doth, but rather beholdeth the heart, so his ears are more attentive to the voice of the heart than of the body.<sup>2</sup>

A strong motive this is to provoke us to look to our hearts, whensoever we open our mouths before the Lord. If in truth we can say, 'Our heart is prepared, O Lord, our heart is prepared,' Ps. lvi. 7, 8, then may we with boldness say to our tongue, 'Awake up, our glory;' though there may be some failing in the outward manner of offering up our spiritual sacrifice of prayer, yet if the heart be prepared to seek the Lord, he will be ready to bear with our errors and to pardon our aberrations; instance that mercy which he shewed to the men of Israel that in Hezekiah's time came to Jerusalem to celebrate the passover. The true intention of their heart was it that Hezekiah pleaded before the Lord when he said, 'The good Lord pardon every one that pre-

pareth his heart to seek God the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.' And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah; for the heart is that which the Searcher of hearts doth of all things most delight in; and thereupon he saith, 'My son, give me thine heart,' Prov. xxiii. 26; 'But when the heart is far from God, it is in vain to draw near to him with the mouth, and to honour him with the lips,' Mat. xv. 8, 9. To offer such an oblation, to burn such incense, is no better than 'to offer swine's blood to bless an idol,' Isa. lxvi. 3. It doth therefore nearly concern us thoroughly to try our hearts, that the cries which we make to God who is a spirit, may not be of the tongue only, but of the heart also, yea, of the heart especially;<sup>1</sup> for the cry commended in Scripture is not of the voice, but of the heart; if therefore, our hearts be in any good manner prepared, the third doctrine will shew that we may with boldness call upon God.

#### Sec. 12. *Of God's hearing prayer.*

III. *God heareth prayer:* for, 'He that planted the ear, shall not he hear? He that teacheth man to understand, shall not he understand?' Ps. xciv. 9, 10. 'He understandeth our thought afar off,' Ps. cxxxix. 3, 4. Much more when it is uttered, and made known to him; for 'there is not a word in our tongue but the Lord knoweth it altogether.' And if he understand any thoughts, and know any words, most of all doth he understand and know the thoughts and words of prayer, which are directly intended to him. For, to join the fourth doctrine with this, by reason of their near affinity,

IV. *God is ready and forward to hearken to that which his saints pray for.* He need not be much solicited and importuned to hear: he listens to hear what suits of his servants are preferred to him; while they are speaking, he will say, 'Behold, I am here.'<sup>2</sup> Besides, this phrase in my text of God's 'inclining his ears,' and others like to it, of 'bowing and bending them,' (which are evidences of a mind

lingua et vox vestra laudet Deum, sed et conscientia vestra, &c.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. cxlviii.*

<sup>1</sup> 'Σπρόθυμος ὁ Θεὸς δεχόμενος εὐχαριστίας.'—*Justin Mart. in fine Epos. Fidei.*

<sup>2</sup> Deus sicut non faciem hominis respicit, tanquam homo, sed magis intuetur cor: sic ad cordis potius vocem, quam corporis, aures ejus, &c.—*Bern. in Ps. Qui habitat, Sermon xvi.*

<sup>1</sup> 'Clamor in Scripturis non vocis sed cordis est.—*Hier. Comment. in Ps. v.*

<sup>2</sup> Ipsum Dominum quere, et exaudiet te, et adhuc te loquente dicet, Ecce, adsum.—*Aug. Enar. in Psalm xxiii. con. 2.*

very willing to hear;) that his 'ears are open and attend to their prayer,' Ps. xxxiv. 15; 2 Chron. vii. 15.) I might here as a real demonstration of this point produce many hundred instances of God's hearing his saints' prayers in all ages of the world; but not to insist on them, this style, 'O thou which hearest prayer,' שְׂמִיעַ תִּפְלֵה, Ps. lxx. 2, attributed to God, is very pertinent to the point in hand. The psalmist had hereupon just cause thus to say unto God, 'Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.' God will not stay till they prepare their heart; but he himself will prepare it. He doth not expect that others should cause him to hear; he will cause himself to hear. Yea, yet further to this purpose he saith, 'It shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer, and whiles they are yet speaking I will hear,' Isa. lxx. 24. Thus much David professeth to be verified in his own case; for, saith he, 'I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin,' Ps. xxxii. 5.

God's omnipresence and omniscience, his presence in every place, and knowledge of all things, is the cause that he heareth prayer: but it is God's own goodness and kindness; it is the efficacy of his Son's intercession; it is the fragrant savour which the sweet incense of prayer sendeth forth, that maketh God so forward to hear. In regard of God's goodness thus saith the psalmist, 'Hear my voice according to thy loving-kindness,' Ps. cxix. 149. Concerning the Son of God, thus he speaketh to his Father, 'I know that thou hearest me always,' John xi. 42. And to us he thereupon thus saith, ' whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you,' John xvi. 23. As for the savour of prayer, it is like that sweet savour that God smelled out of Noah's offering, Gen. viii. 21. For much incense is offered with the prayers of all saints, Rev. viii. 3. Good ground, therefore, had David to say to God, 'Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of mine hands as an evening sacrifice,' Ps. exli. 2.

'O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!' Ps. viii. 1. Who is a God like unto thee, O Lord, that is so able, so ready to hear his servants' suits? Many of the gods of the heathen

have no ears at all. Many have ears, and hear not at all. The creatures that hear can hear no more, no further, than by the sound of a voice is brought to their ears. Among them all, none can hear the inward desires of the heart; none can tell whether voice and heart consent or no. They are oft loath to hear, what they cannot but hear; they are not always able to grant what they may be willing to hear. It is a divine propensity, even thy property, O searcher of all hearts, O Father of mercies, and God of power, to have thine ears always open and attentive to the saints' prayers, to hear their voice and supplications, their outward cries and inward sighs, and to grant all their desires, and that because thou art full of mercy.<sup>1</sup> 'O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!' Ps. viii. 9.

What good and just cause have saints to make known their needs to God, in all distresses to call upon him! He is not a God that is talking or pursuing, or in a journey, or sleepeth, or must be awaked, 1 Kings xviii. 27, so as in those or any other like respects he cannot hear; but ever at hand, ready to hear, able to help.<sup>2</sup> What more forcible motive can there be to incite us to call upon him? From this property of God that he is a hearer of prayer, the psalmist maketh this inference, 'Unto him shall all flesh come,' Ps. lxx. 2. From such a motive as this the servants of the king of Syria persuaded their master to seek favour of the king of Israel: 'We have heard,' say they, 'that the kings of Israel are merciful kings, let us go to him,' &c., 1 Kings xxii. 31. We have so heard it, as we may well believe it, that our God heareth prayers, and inclineth his ear to supplications. To him, therefore, let us go. Christ having given evidence in the days of his flesh of his ableness and readiness to cure all that came unto him, they came themselves, as many as had plagues, and they brought others unto him that were taken with diseases, Mat. iii. 10, and iv. 14. What moved them so to do? Surely faith in Christ's power and will to help. Whereupon Christ was wont to use these phrases to

<sup>1</sup> Plenus misericordia, non anovet deprecationem mean a se.—*Hier. Comment. in Psalm v.*

<sup>2</sup> Inclinat se nobis ut nostra ad eum ascendat oratio.—*Ambr. in Orat. de Obi Theodos.*



them, 'As thou hast believed, so be it unto thee,' Mat. viii. 13; 'Thy faith hath made thee whole,' chap. ix. 22; 'According to your faith be it unto you,' ver. 29; 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth,' Mark ix. 23. Let us therefore believe that God is ready to hear, as we have heard, and in faith 'go boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,' Heb. iv. 16.

To make us more highly prize this privilege, note the first doctrine.

Sec. 13. *Of the kindness of hearing prayer.*

V. *It is a great kindness in God to hear prayer.* The prophet that was hereby moved to love God, and praise God, (for saith he by way of gratulation, 'I love, because the Lord hath heard my prayer,') accounted it a great kindness. As a kindness the saints have desired it for themselves and others. As a kindness it hath been promised of God, and by him performed as a kindness. Answerably the saints have acknowledged it for a kindness, and as for a kindness praised the Lord. But on the contrary, God as a judgment hath threatened not to hear prayer for themselves or for others, and it hath been lamented as a heavy judgment.

By hearing prayer God giveth evidence of the notice which he taketh of our estate, of the respect he beareth to our persons, of the pity he hath of our miseries, of his purpose to supply our wants, and of his mind to do us good according to our needs. What greater kindness can we expect? When, therefore, thou observest that thy prayer is not rejected, thou mayest be secure, because his mercy is not removed from thee.<sup>1</sup> But when no respect is borne to persons, where there is no compassion of their distresses, no purpose, no mind to do them good, then shall the ear be turned from them, no regard had to their petitions.

This being such a kindness, as a kindness it ought to be accepted, and our answerable care it ought to be, to carry ourselves worthy thereof; and that is by making our acknowledgment thereof, as here the psalmist doth, by rendering due praise

<sup>1</sup> Cum videris non a te amotam deprecationem tuam, securus esto, quia non est a te amota misericordia ejus.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. lxx.*

to him who is ready to hear us for our good, by opening our ears to his word,<sup>1</sup> who is so ready to open his ears to our prayers: to be ready to do what he requireth of us, as he is ready to do what we desire him to do for us. Otherwise we shew ourselves most unworthy of the forenamed kindness: we provoke him to be angry against our prayer, to shut his ears, and to turn them away from us. And so much hath he threatened. 'Because,' saith he, 'I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, &c. They shall call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me,' Prov. i. 24, 28. 'For he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abominable,' Prov. xxviii. 9.<sup>2</sup> And that not without just and great cause. For what comparison is there betwixt the Creator and creatures, the Lord and servants? 'When we have done all those things that are commanded us, we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do,' Luke xvii. 10. But God is tied to none. What he granteth to us is of his mere grace. Of the benefit of this grace that we may partake, let our care be to endeavour with our uttermost power to do our duty. For the ears of God are always open to the prayers of the righteous.<sup>3</sup>

Thus much of God's hearing prayer.

The use to be made thereof followeth.

Sec. 14. *Of the encouragement men have from God's hearing to pray.*

Ver. 2. *Therefore I will call upon him in my days.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Exauditus es! gratias ago quod exauditus es.—*Chrys. Hom. De Profet. Evang.*

<sup>2</sup> Quamdiu in tenebris erroris sum, non me exaudit. Quum vero sol justitie venerit in corde meo, tunc me exaudit.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. v.*

<sup>3</sup> Semper pice aures Dei justorum precibus patent.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. lxx.*

<sup>4</sup> The prophet joineth these two together with a copulative particle, thus, אֶקְרָא אֲדַבְרֵי יָמַי, and in my days I will call. But because there is in the beginning of the verse this causal particle, כִּי, for, or because, the copulative must either be used in way of emphasis thus, 'Because thou hast inclined thine ears to me, even in my days I will call,' or else be put for a note of inference, as Tremel, and Jun. *Ibero.* And the king's translators, 'Therefore will I call.' This phrase, אֲדַבְרֵי יָמַי, in my days, is directly taken; some take it for continuance of

These words do note the use which the prophet made of God's readiness to hear him: which as a just consequence followed from thence. God having shewed his readiness to hear him, he would from thence take heart still to call upon God. This consequence is here amplified by the time, thus, in my days,<sup>1</sup> which time, because it is indefinitely set down, compriseth under it all a man's time, so long as he liveth: and because the days of trial are by a kind of property called a man's days, and they are the most seasonable days for man to pray and God to hear, this phrase, in my days, may in particular be applied to the time of trial, the days of his visitation.<sup>2</sup> Wherefore to join the consequence of calling upon God, and the time thereof, in his days, and that in both the forenamed acceptions, to join, I say, all together, the doctrine thence properly arising is this,

God's hearing one's prayer in former distresses is a good encouragement in all future distresses to call upon him. Thus Jacob having called on God, as he was going from his father Isaac to his uncle Laban, and being graciously heard, took encouragement from thence to call on God again when he heard that his brother Esau came out against him with four hundred men. Yea, in his prayer he thus pleadeth God's former favour to him: 'With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two hands: deliver me, I pray thee,' &c. And again, meeting with the man Jesus Christ, he would not let him go till he had blessed him, and given him assurance of safety. And again, when he had cause to fear the envy of all the nations round about him for the cruelty of his sons in destroying the Shechemites, 'at Bethel he built an altar to God,'

time, as the king's translators, who thus turn it, 'as long as I live.' For the word in my days being indefinitely set down, may fitly be extended to all his days, even the whole time of his life. Others, as Tremel. and Jun., expound it of the time of affliction, thus, *in diebus meis, i. afflictionis mee*; as Ps. cxxxvii. 7, the time of Jerusalem's misery is called the day of Jerusalem. Neither of these cross the other: but both may stand together, as is manifested by the doctrine gathered out of these words. Of praying always, see 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. sec. 113, 137, on Eph. vi. 18.

<sup>1</sup> Non in paucis, sed in omnibus diebus vite mee; non certis diebus invocare, non omnibus, fastidientis est, non sperantis, &c.—*Aug. in Orat. De Obiit. Theodos.*

<sup>2</sup> Dies meos possum dicere, dies miserie mee, dies mortalitatis mee &c.—*Aug. Enar. in hunc Ps.*

an evidence of his calling upon God. And again, 'He set up a pillar, and poured a drink-offering thereon,' another like evidence of his calling on God. Thus time after time in his days he called on God. The like might be exemplified in Joshua, Moses, David, and other kings and prophets: yea, in Christ himself, who, knowing that his Father heard him always, always called upon him: in his apostles, and other saints. But it is enough to point at them.

God's former hearing of our prayer is an actual evidence and real demonstration, not only in general of God's willingness to hear, and ableness to help, whereof before, but also of his good-will to us in particular, for he ever remains the same God, of the same mind and will. 'I am Jehovah,' saith this God, 'I change not.' Such prayers as were once acceptable to him, will be ever acceptable to him. If after he have once opened his ear he shut it again, the fault is in him that maketh the prayer. Have ye not read what answer the Lord made to Joshua, when, upon the discomfiture of the host of Israel before the men of Ai, he 'fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until even-tide'? It was this, 'There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before the enemies, until you take the accursed thing from among you.' But where there is not some manifest obstacle in the person that prayeth, or in his prayer, he that hath once been heard may assure himself that he shall be heard again. God will ever be like himself.

Good cause there is that we should on this ground diligently observe at what times, in what things, God heareth our prayer. This is a principal prop to support our faith. It is noted as a point of wisdom in the servants of the king of Syria, that they 'did diligently observe whether anything would come from the king of Israel, and did hastily catch it,' 1 Kings xx. 33. It would certainly be a part of better wisdom, and a matter of far greater consequence, diligently to observe wherein God's ear hath been inclined to us, what suits he hath granted unto us. Our spirits would be much quickened thereby, and our faith much strengthened. He that thus pleaded God's hearing of others' prayers, 'Our fathers cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded,' Ps.

xxii. 5, had his faith questionless much supported thereby. How much more may we by God's hearing our own prayer? Such a ground of faith had David when he said, 'The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.' 1 Sam. xvii. 37. We lose the main benefit and comfort of God's gracious inclination toward us, if we make not this use thereof.

*Quæst.* How may we know when God heareth our prayer?

*Ans.* When we are sure that our prayer for the matter is according to God's will, (1 John v. 14.) agreeable to his word, and withal have the inward testimony of our conscience bearing us witness that in truth from our heart we have made our prayer, and God hath thereupon granted what we have craved, we may, we ought to think and say, that God hath heard our prayer.<sup>1</sup> This is not simply in itself a vainglorious ostentation of the worth of our prayer, as of a work proceeding from us, but a grateful acknowledgment of God's gracious acceptance of his own ordinance. God is the fountain of all blessing. He can cause his blessings to flow from him by what means seemeth best to himself. Now he in his wisdom hath sanctified prayer as an ordinary means of receiving blessing from him. Wherefore, when God upon prayer made for such and such blessings hath granted them, to think and say God hath heard our prayer, is but to acknowledge that he hath done the things in and by the means which he himself hath sanctified, and to justify his faithfulness in that order and course which himself hath set down. We oft pray, and God granteth that we pray for, and yet we are loath to say, God hath heard our prayer. We are prone to think that that which happeneth, though by prayer it were craved of God, falleth out by chance; and that it would have fallen out whether we had prayed for it or no. This conceit maketh us backward to praise God for the good things which we have. Fortune and chance<sup>2</sup> have ob-

<sup>1</sup> Cum hæc omnia gesta apud me cernerem, quomodo non crederem quod inclinavit aurem suam mihi.—*Aug. Enar. in hunc Ps.*

<sup>2</sup> Of chance, see 'The Extent of God's Providence,' on Mat. x. 29, sec. 5. 'Si casibus reguntur homines, nulla providentia aliquid geritur.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. xxxi.* Fortuitum (que,

tained so great esteem among men, as God is thereby robbed of much glory. No such thieves of God's glory as they; they take away the whole glory of his providence. For if men's affairs be ordered by chance, nothing is done by providence. But if we were thoroughly instructed in the divine providence, and persuaded of the wise order and course of the same, in and by such means as in the word of God are revealed, our opinion of fortune and chance would vanish as a mist before the bright sunshine. For that which is casual (which the vulgar call fortune) is ordered by a certain secret course, which is providence. Now a diligent observation of the fruit and effect of our prayers will give us good evidence of the divine providence, and make us more thankful for good things bestowed, and more faithful, fervent, and constant in praying for the things which we want. And let no man hence imagine that God may be tired with suitors and suits. He is not as man. He taketh great delight in prayers well-ordered and rightly made. Such suits, the more frequent they are, the more welcome they are. Therefore, because thou always receivest, always crave.<sup>1</sup>

This of the manifestation of God's kindness in general.

The particular exemplification thereof followeth.

Sec. 15. *Of the expression of the prophet's distress.*

Ver. 3. *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.*

Here beginneth the exemplification<sup>2</sup> of God's kindness to his servant; the first branch whereof is a description of the danger wherein he was, and out of which he was delivered. Now to magnify the kindness of God the more in delivering him out of the same, he setteth it out with much variety of words and phrase.

1. The first word כְּחַלִּי is diversely translated. Some expound it snares,<sup>3</sup> some cords,<sup>4</sup> some sorrows.<sup>5</sup>

vulgo fortuna nominatur) occulto quodam ordine regitur.—*Aug. contr. Acad., lib. i.*

<sup>1</sup> Quia semper accipis, semper invoca.—*Amb. in Orat. de Obi. Theodos.*

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 2. <sup>3</sup> Govevens. Eng. Metre. <sup>4</sup> *Fois, Jerome.*

<sup>5</sup> K. Translat., Trem. and Jun., Gr. Septuagint.

The reason of this difference is because the word itself is metaphorical.<sup>1</sup> It is taken from cruel creditors, who will be sure to tie their debtors fast, as with cords, so as they shall not easily get loose and free again. The pledge which the debtor leaveth with his creditor as a pawn, hath this name in Hebrew; so also a cord wherewith things are fast tied; and the mast of a ship fast fixed, and tied on every side with cords; and bands or troops of men combined together; and the pain of a woman in travail, which is very great; and destruction with pain and anguish. Thus we see that such a word is used here as setteth out a most lamentable and inextricable case.

2. The next word, *of death*, בּוֹת, sheweth that his case was deadly; death was before his eyes; death was as it were threatened.

3. He is said to be *compassed* herewith in two respects: (1.) To shew that these sorrows were not far off, but even upon him, as waters that compass a man when he is in the midst of them, or as enemies that begirt a place. (2.) To shew that they were not few, but many sorrows, as bees that swarm together.

4. The word translated *pains*, כּוֹצָרִי, in the original is put for sacks fast bound together, and flint stones, and fierce enemies, and hard straits; so as this word also aggravateth his misery.

5. The word translated *hell*, שְׂאֵיל, is usually taken in the Old Testament for the grave; it is derived from שָׂאֵל, a verb that signifieth to crave, because the grave is ever craving, and never satisfied.

6. The words translated *got hold on me*, כּוֹצָאוּנִי, and *I found*, אֶחְצֵנָה, are both the same verb; they differ only in circumstances of tense, number, and person. The former sheweth that these miseries found him, and as a serjeant they seized on him; he did not seek them, he did not wittingly and wilfully cast himself into their clutches; he would most willingly have escaped them, if he could. The latter sheweth that indeed he found them; he felt the tartness and bitterness, the smart and pain of them.

<sup>1</sup> Debita, vel pignora pro debitis. Item funes et dolores qui eum funes constringunt. חֶבֶל Debit, obstrictus est aere alieno.

7. The word translated *trouble*, צָרָה of צִוֵּר, hath a near affinity with the former word translated pain, כּוֹצָר, צִוֵּר, and is used to set out as great misery as that; and yet further to aggravate the same, another word is added thereto, sorrow.

8. The last word, *sorrow*, יָנֹן, יָנָה<sup>1</sup> importeth such a kind of calamity as maketh them that lie under it much to grieve, and also moveth others that behold it much to pity them. It is oft used in the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Either of these two last words, trouble and sorrow, do declare a very perplexed and distressed estate; what then both of them joined together? For the Holy Ghost doth not multiply words in vain.

Sec. 16. *Of the great distresses wherunto saints are subject.*

The forementioned expression of the prophet's distress affordeth this observation.

*Saints may fall into deadly dangers and desperate distresses.* None can deny this prophet to be a saint. The express mention of death and grave give just occasion to say that his danger was deadly.<sup>2</sup> The other words of compassing about, getting hold, finding, bonds, pains, trouble, sorrow, as they have been expounded, do argue that his distress was desperate; desperate, I say, not in relation to God, as if there were no hope of help in him, but in relation to man, being such as is beyond his ability to afford any relief, and so desperate, according to that which Jehoshaphat said, 'We know not what to do,'—namely, in regard of human help; yet in respect of his hope in God he addeth, 'Our eyes are upon thee, O our God,' 2 Chron. xx. 12.

Take a view of the dangers and distresses wherein were Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 7, and xxxiv. 30; Joseph, Gen. xxxvii. 18, &c., and xxxix. 19, &c.; the Israelites in Egypt, Exod. i. 14, &c., and v. 5, &c.; and at the Red Sea, Exod. xiv. 9; in the time of the judges very often. And wherein were Moses, Exod. xvii. 4, Num. xvi. 2, &c.; Job, chap. ii. 13; David, 1 Sam. xxx. 6; Abijah, 2 Chron.

<sup>1</sup> Ingenuit pre dolore. Hinc γένω, gemo, deploro.

<sup>2</sup> Quicumque in via hujus seculi fuerit, quamvis Moyses, et Aaron, quamvis Hieremias sit et Helias, tamen necesse est eum de tentationibus Ægypti, et solitudinis bibere.—*Jerome, Comment. lib. i. in Hab. 2.*

xiii. 13; Asa, 2 Chron. xiv. 11; Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 12; Hezekiah, Isa. xxxvii. 3, and xxxviii. 10; Jonah, chap. i. 15; Jeremiah, chap. xxxviii. 6; Daniel and his three companions, Dan. iii. 21, and vi. 16; Christ, Luke iv. 29; the apostles, Acts v. 18; Peter, Acts xii. 4, &c.; Paul, Acts xxi. 28, &c.; and many other, whose histories are recorded in the Holy Scriptures, and other books; take a view of all the dangers and distresses wherein they were, and it will evidently appear that they were deadly and desperate.

This God suffers both to give the more clear demonstration of his own divine properties, as his of prudence, providence, power, pity, truth, &c., and also to afford means for a more thorough examination of the graces he bestoweth on us,<sup>1</sup> as of our faith, hope, wisdom, patience, courage, constancy, &c. Yea, he suffereth the day of tribulation to fall on us, that we should call on him, for, were it not for affliction, we should scarce call on God.<sup>2</sup>

1. Take heed, therefore, of over-rash censure. Judge not such as are compassed with the sorrows of death, and on whom the pains of hell have got hold who have found trouble and sorrow; if they have professed themselves to be God's servants, judge them not to be hypocrites, to be forsaken by reason of their distresses. This was the fault of Job's wife, to whom Job made this wise and just answer, 'Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?' Job ii. 9, 10; whereby he sheweth that the same God who sometimes giveth to his saints much prosperity, may also in his unsearchable wisdom lay heavy crosses upon them, and yet account them saints. The friends also of Job, though they performed a friendly part in coming to visit him, yet foully failed in misjudging his inward disposition and outward conversation, and that upon no other ground than the great calamity wherein they saw him lie. On this very ground David's enemies judged him to be forsaken of God. This censure is both malicious in itself, and also injurious and grievous to the party mis-censured. All that the devil could do against Job could not so vex his soul

and perplex his spirit as his wife's and friends' censure did. Many saints that with their crosses are much pressed, are with such censures almost oppressed.

2. As others may be misjudged, so also may men mis-censure themselves and their own estate, by thinking they are cast off and forsaken of God, because God suffereth them to fall into the snares of death, into trouble and sorrow. The apostle was otherwise minded when he said, 'We are troubled on every side, but not distressed: we are perplexed, but not in despair: persecuted, but not forsaken: cast down, but not destroyed,' 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. When a man hath the testimony of his conscience for the sincerity of his heart, he need no more doubt of God's fatherly favour to him, though he be as much afflicted as Job was, than Job did, who, notwithstanding all that Satan could do, or his friends could say, doubted not of his title and interest to God's favour, but confidently said, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, and I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation,' Job xiii. 15, 16.

3. There being no such outward affliction but may befall a saint, we may on this ground comfort ourselves, even in the midst of trials. If this were a sound ground of comfort, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man,' 1 Cor. x. 13—as sound it must needs be, because laid down by an apostle—surely this must needs be much more a sound one. 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to a child of God.' Faint not, therefore, under any cross, but remember the consolation 'which speaketh unto you as unto children: My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him,' Heb. xii. 5.<sup>1</sup>

4. That when we find trouble and sorrow we may not faint, it is fit to be prepared beforehand; and in the days of our peace and prosperity to meditate on this condition whereunto all saints are subject, from which none are exempt. That which befalls any one may befall every one. There never was nor shall be any that have had or shall have a protection in this case, or immunity from this condition. For our preparation we have an excellent direction, Eph.

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. i. part 2, sec. 2; *ibid.*, part 4, sec. 11; *ibid.*, treat. ii. part 5, sec. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ad hoc permisi diem tribulationis tibi fieri, quia forte si non tribulareris, non invocares me.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. xliv.*

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii. part 5, sec. 20.

vi. 10, 11, &c., which was for this end prescribed, as is evident by this clause, 'That you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand,' Eph. vi. 13.<sup>1</sup>

Sec. 17. *Of aggravating a distress after deliverance.*

The forementioned<sup>2</sup> aggravation of the prophet's distress at this time of gratulation, even when he was freed from it, further sheweth that—

*The uttermost extremity of a calamity is to be acknowledged after we are delivered out of it.*<sup>3</sup> Read for this purpose the beginning of Deborah's song, Judges v. 6, 7, and Hezekiah's whole song, Ps. xxxviii. 10, &c. David is copious herein in many of his psalms, and St Paul in many of his epistles.

1. The judgment of a man will be hereby the better instructed in the cause of his deliverance to be from God, and the more convinced of the equity of his duty in giving thanks.

2. His heart also will be the more enlarged to admire, and his mouth the wider opened to celebrate the power, and wisdom, and mercy of God in his deliverance.

The application of this point nearly concerns us who have so lately<sup>4</sup> received so gracious, so miraculous a deliverance from so deadly a danger, as the like hath not been heard of in former ages. The kind of danger, and the fear which possessed us while we were in the midst thereof, is oft to be meditated on; yea, and to be recorded also, as here the psalmist by divine instinct recordeth his, that if it should in process of time slip out of our memories, we might have that means to recall it again. And not only the substance thereof in general, but also such particular circumstances as may make to the aggravation thereof.

Many will whine pitifully while the cross lieth on them, and complain exceedingly of the weight thereof. They will then set out every circumstance of aggravation to the uttermost, if not beyond the uttermost truth; but when they are freed, at ease, and at liberty, then lightly think of it, and say there was more fear than needed. Thus is the deliverance

slighted, God's power, providence, and grace disrespected, men's hearts closed, and tongues tied from giving to God his due praise; and God provoked either to inflict heavier judgments, or else to cease to smite them any more with the stripes of a father, and to give them over to a reprobate sense. In a word, by that means the profit and benefit of a visitation is lost.

There be others that after their deliverance will much speak of the danger wherein they were, and of the very extremity thereof; but how? boastingly, vaingloriously; bragging of their own wit and forecast, or, to use their own base and vulgar phrase, of their good fortune. Thus is God by another extreme robbed of that honour which is due to him.

To avoid these two extremes the forenamed duty is rightly and wisely to be performed; that so that which is good in the substance may for the manner be well done. For which end these rules may be of good use:—

1. Empty thy soul of all self-conceit, and humbly acknowledge thyself 'not worthy of the least of all God's mercies,' Gen. xxxii. 10.

2. Well weigh with thyself, and willingly make known to others, what little hope of deliverance thou hadst in the extremity of thy calamity. 'I said,' saith he who made a psalm of praise after his recovery, 'I said, in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave,' &c. Isa. xxxviii. 10, &c.

3. Record the evidences of God's more than ordinary providence, that thyself and others which hear may discern where the finger of God hath shewed itself. He that said, 'This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvellous in our eyes,' Ps. xviii. 23, well observed the work of God.

4. Remember how thou wert affected in the distress; whether thou didst then call upon God for deliverance. If thou didst, make known as much. Boldly think and say, as the psalmist, 'In my distress I cried to my God: he heard my voice,' Ps. xviii. 6. This will be an evidence of the work of God, that he hath delivered thee.

5. What thou doest, do in way of praise to the glory of God, as the psalmist where he recordeth a great deliverance, and ascribeth it to the Lord, inserteth this clause, 'Who is worthy to be praised,' Ps. xviii. 3.

6. What thou doest in this kind do before such as

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat i. part 4. sec. 6, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 15.

<sup>3</sup> 'Graphicè misera vite sue rationes, postquam ab iis liberaverat eum Deus, describit.'—*Aug. Confess.*, lib. 1, 2, 3, &c.

<sup>4</sup> Sec. 3.

thou supposest have minds and hearts disposed to take notice of God's works; as this prophet said, 'I will pay my vows unto the Lord in the presence of his people.' Ps. cxvi. 14; before such, a man dares not boast of anything but of God and his work.

7. In this kind what thou doest, do it as before the Lord. When thou art alone before him, then open thy soul in the aggravation of thy distress to the full. When thou art in company let thy heart be fixed on the Lord. No better means to keep thee from boasting in thyself. Thus did he whose mouth was so full of God's praises, 'I have set the Lord,' saith he, 'always before me,' Ps. xvi. 8.

Sec. 18. *Of the resolution of the fourth verse.*

Ver. 4. *Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*

II. The<sup>1</sup> second branch of the exemplification of God's kindness setteth out the means which the prophet used to obtain deliverance of the Lord, and that was in one word prayer, which is here noted in this fourth verse, where we may observe:

1. A general declaration of that means, 'Then called I upon the name of the Lord.'

2. A particular expression of the main substance thereof, 'O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.'

In the general, three distinct points are observable:

1. The time, 'Then.'

2. The action, 'I called.'

3. The object, 'Upon the name of the Lord.'

In the particular, we may discern:

1. The manner of framing his prayer.

2. The matter that is prayed for.

The manner pointeth out two graces of special use to make prayer effectual:

1. His faith, 'O Lord.'

2. His fervency, 'I beseech thee.'

The matter expresseth:

1. The thing desired, 'Deliver.'

2. The subject for which it is desired, 'My soul.'

Sec. 19. *Of seeking a remedy in misery.*

The first point to be observed in the fourth verse is the general declaration of the means used for deliverance. And thereof the first special branch is the time when that means was used, 'Then called I,' &c.

<sup>1</sup> See sec. 2.

That particle of time is in the original expressed by a copulative particle, 'and,' which is thus joined with the former, 'I found sorrow, *וַיִּשְׂכַּח*, and on the name of the Lord I called.' It is usual with the Hebrews to point at the time of doing a thing by joining the thing done with the occasion of doing it. And if in English we should thus speak, 'I was in prison and petitioned the king,' any would thence gather the time when the petition was made, as if it had been said, 'When I was in prison, then I petitioned.' Wherefore for perspicuity sake this particle of time, 'then,' according to the true sense of the word, is here not unfitly used, and from thence this instruction may be inferred.

*In distress redress is to be sought.*<sup>1</sup> It is that which God hath commanded, and to which he hath made a promise, Ps. l. 15, which the saints in all ages have done, Ps. xxii. 5, and found good success therein; yea, which very sense teacheth unreasonable creatures to do, Job xxxviii. 41.

It is the very end why God hath afforded means of redress, that they should be sought and used. To be careless herein is to neglect the divine providence for our good, whereby men shew themselves both ungrateful to God and injurious to their own souls.

Just cause there is on this ground to reprove those stupid blocks who are never moved in any judgment to inquire after any means whereby it may be removed; but upon conceit that it is an inevitable destiny neglect all means, thinking that if their hap be to escape, it is well, but if they must needs perish, it cannot be avoided.<sup>2</sup> Thus, by the shallowness of their conceit, they cross the incomprehensibility of God's wisdom, or rather by their obstinate blockishness they pervert the revealed goodness of God. For the wise God, keeping close to himself his determined purpose, hath in goodness revealed means for such an accomplishment of his counsel as may best make for our good; in use of which means, if we be conscionable, we shall assuredly find God's will accomplished to the best. It is not therefore their destiny, but their folly, that such as neglect means warranted and sanctified by

<sup>1</sup> *Revera pauper et inops, pulsa ad eum qui aperit.*—*Bern. super Cant. Sermon. 1.*

<sup>2</sup> See 'Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part 5, sec. 18, 19.

God's word do perish, wherein they make themselves accessory to their own destruction. For howsoever the patrons of destiny do attribute all things thereto, both good and evil, yet it is evident, that God justly revengeth in evil men their deserts, but bestoweth all good things through an undeserved grace, of his own merciful inclination; so as of him grace and help in time of need is to be sought.<sup>1</sup>

This therefore will be our wisdom, to take notice of the distress wherein we are, to inquire after the best means of help and succour, and to be conscientious in using it. Common sense and natural reason move men to seek after temporal, sensible remedies, and to learn which of them have a *probatum est*, an experimental evidence of good done by them. To such as are minded to believe God's word, and to use that remedy to which God himself and his saints in all ages have given a *probatum est*, the next following doctrine will be of good use.

#### Sec. 20. Of prayer in affliction.

The second<sup>2</sup> special branch of the general declaration of the means is the action used: 'I called,' saith the prophet. This having relation to the Lord, as the next words shew, setteth out his praying to God. And this was that sovereign, that effectual means which he used; so as—

*Prayer is the best remedy in a calamity.* This is indeed a true *catholicum*,<sup>3</sup> a general remedy for every malady. Not like the empiric's *catholicum*, which sometimes may work, but for the most part fails, but that which upon assured evidence and constant experience hath its *probatum est*: being that which the most wise, learned, honest, and skilful Physician that ever was, or can be, hath prescribed,—even he that teacheth us how to bear what is to be borne, or how to heal and help what hath been borne.<sup>4</sup> Well weigh the testimonies of Scripture<sup>5</sup> pro-

<sup>1</sup> Fati assertores et bona et mala hominum fato tribunt. Deus autem in malis hominum merita eorum debita retributione percipitur, bona vero per inlebitam gratiam misericordie voluntate largitur.—*Aug. contr. 2 Epist. P. log. ad Bonifac.*, lib. i. cap. 6.

<sup>2</sup> See sec. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Quintillianus, lib. ii. cap. 13, interpretatur καθολικά universalis, vel perper-tualia.

<sup>4</sup> Potens est Deus, vel docere tolerandum, vel sanare toleratum.—*Aug. Lxxv. in Ps. xlix.*

<sup>5</sup> Sec. 19.

duced for proof of the general doctrine, that redress is to be sought, and they will be found very pertinent to this particular kind of redress, prayer. This is the remedy which God hath commanded to be used, and whereto he hath promised his blessing, which accordingly hath been used, and an answerable blessing observed. Yea, further to shew the effectual operation hereof, when the Lord hath resolved not to cure, he hath forbidden this remedy to be used; as if, if it were used, it must needs do the deed, it could not be in vain.

It is no latent virtue in prayer, as it is a work performed by man, that maketh it so effectual in operation; but the order which it hath pleased the divine wisdom to establish. God being the fountain of all blessing, the author of all help, that 'father of lights from whom every good gift cometh,' James i. 17, who can convey what help and succour it pleaseth him,—and there is nothing so difficult which, by the help of God, cannot be accomplished,<sup>1</sup>—he who can afford help by what means it seemeth best to his wisdom, hath sanctified this means of prayer for us, thereby 'to obtain mercy and to find grace to help in time of need,' Heb. iv. 16. And that because in and thereby God who is called upon is much honoured, and man stripped of all matter of boasting and self-conceit.<sup>2</sup> For in that men seek help by prayer of God, they testify an acknowledgment,—

1. Of their need. For need, yea, sense of need makes men crave.

2. Of their own impotency. For they who are able to help themselves, use not to seek help of others.

3. Of the disability of other creatures to help. For they who can have succour nearer hand, will not seek further off for it. By prayer the soul ascendeth into the highest heavens, to the throne of the highest majesty, because lower than that it can have no hope of help.

Finally, if ever men uncover their nakedness, open their sores, lay forth their wretchedness, set their

<sup>1</sup> Nihil est tam arduum atque difficile, quod non Deo juvante planissimum atque expeditissimum fiat. In ipsum itaque suspensi, ab eo auxilium deprecemur.—*Aug. de Lib. Arbit.*, lib. i. cap. 6.

<sup>2</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. sec. 17.



sins in order, confess their guiltiness, acknowledge their cursedness, cast away all cloaks of vain hopes in themselves, and in other creatures, it is in prayer. For proof hereof, set the pattern of the saints' prayers recorded in Holy Scripture before you.

1. Here take notice of the cause why men in their needs and distresses lust and have not, desire to have and cannot obtain: even because, as the apostle hath set it down, they ask not. Hath God sanctified a means for attaining help in all our necessities and extremities, and shall we think that he will suffer his ordinance to be crossed? Can we expect help by any other course than that which in his wisdom he hath prescribed? 'Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.'

2. Be exhorted, as to take notice of your necessity, so to be conscionable in using this warrantable remedy.

(1.) When thou feelest any symptoms of God's anger vexing and grieving thy soul, pray, and say, 'O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath,' &c., Ps. xxxviii. 1.

(2.) When thou observest the power of sin to begin to prevail over thee, and to make thee a vassal, pray, and say, 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me,' Ps. xix. 13.

(3.) When fears of falling away possess thee, pray 'that thy faith fail not,' Luke xxii. 32.

(4.) When thou art assaulted with violent temptations, pray against them: pray that 'God's grace may be sufficient for thee,' 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

(5.) When thou wantest wisdom, or any other grace, 'ask it of God.'

(6.) When thou art visited with sickness, or art in any like distress, pray as Hezekiah did; yea, 'Call for the elders of the church, let them pray over thee,' James v. 14; that at least 'the Lord would strengthen thee on the bed of languishing, and make thy bed in thy sickness,' Ps. xli. 3.

(7.) When there is fear of enemies entering into the land, pray that 'there be no invasion, nor complaining in our streets,' Ps. cxlv. 14.

(8.) When thou hearest of traitors conspiring against the peace of the land, pray to God to 'turn their counsel into foolishness,' 2 Sam. xv. 13.

(9.) When thou seest multitudes scattered abroad,

as having no shepherd, pray 'the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest,' Mat. ix. 38.

(10.) When ministers are silent or silenced, pray that 'they may open their mouth boldly, to make known the mysteries of the gospel,' Eph. vi. 19.

(11.) When thou canst not profit by the word, pray that 'the Lord would open thine eyes and heart,' Ps. cxix. 18; Acts xvi. 14.

(12.) When thou wantest good success, pray, and say, 'Prosper, O Lord, the work of our hands; O prosper thou our handiwork,' Ps. xc. 17.

(13.) When thou fearest that thy children have done amiss, do as Job did, 'offer the sacrifice of prayer for them,' Job i. 5.

Let the like be done for husbands, wives, masters, servants, kindred, friends, neighbours, and all others in any need or distress. In all things, at all times pray: pray for removing evils, pray for obtaining good things.

#### Sec. 21. *Of calling on God as known by name.*

The third special branch of the general declaration of the means is the object to which the fore-mentioned action of prayer was directed: and that is thus expressed—'the name of the Lord.' Of calling on God, I shall not need here to speak;<sup>1</sup> all that was before delivered of prayer concerned prayer made to God.

The point that remaineth to be insisted upon, is the manner of setting down this object, thus, the name of the Lord.

The name of God is that whereby God is made known.<sup>2</sup> By this phrase, then, he importeth that he called on God, as God had made himself known; with understanding of, and respect to those divine attributes whereby God as by a name had revealed himself: whereby is given us to understand that

*God must be called upon as one that is known.*<sup>3</sup> The many titles attributed to God in saints' prayers, whereby God is manifested to be the true God, and distinguished from all false gods, are evident demonstrations of this truth. Take for instance these:

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. sec. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> See the 'Guide to go to God,' sec. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Leges precatorem Augustini ad Deum, Soliloquiorum, lib. i. cap. 1.*

'O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac,' Gen. xxxii. 9. 'The Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh,' Num. xxvii. 16. 'O Lord of hosts,' 1 Sam. i. 11. 'Thou art great, O Lord God: there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears,' 2 Sam. vii. 22. 'O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee,' &c., 1 Kings viii. 13. '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,' 2 Kings xix. 15. 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty,' &c., 1 Chron. xxix. 11. 'O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy,' &c., Neh. i. 5. The books of the Psalms and prophets abound with such titles as set out the name of God. And in the New Testament thus his name is set out: 'The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' Eph. iii. 14.

God's name, as it is set out in the word, is both a glorious name, full of majesty; and also a gracious name, full of mercy. His majesty worketh fear and reverence, his mercy faith and confidence.<sup>1</sup> By these graces man's heart is kept within such a compass, as he will, neither presume above that which is meet, nor despair more than there is cause. But where God's name is not rightly known, it cannot be avoided but that they who come before him must needs rush upon the rock of presumption, or sink into the gulf of desperation. Necessary, therefore, it is that God be known of them that pray to him, that in truth they may say, 'We have called upon the name of the Lord.'

Be persuaded hereby all that desire so to offer up your spiritual sacrifice of supplication to God, as he may have respect to your persons and prayers, (as he had respect to Abel and his offering;) be persuaded to learn to know the name of God, as in his word it is made known; and then, especially when you draw near unto him, meditate on his name. Assuredly God will take good notice of them that take due notice of him, and will open his ears to them by name who rightly call upon his name.

<sup>1</sup> Nullum Dei nomen reperietis quod non aut pietatis gratiam, aut potentiam majestatis sonet.—*Bern. super Cant.*, Serm. xv.

Sec. 22. *Of saints' familiar access to God.*

The particular expression of the substance of the prophet's prayer is in these words, 'O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.' Wherein the first thing to be considered is the manner of framing his prayer to God, in the vocative case and second person, as it were face to face speaking unto God: 'O Lord;' whereby we are taught that

*Saints have a holy familiarity with God.*<sup>1</sup> They need not send in their petitions to him by some of his servants, they may even by name present their prayers to himself; yea, they ought so to do. To omit many hundred of examples that might be alleged out of the approved prayers of the servants of God, guided therein by the Spirit of God, and recorded by the Holy Ghost, (for this was their constant custom, to direct their prayers even to God himself by name,) that pattern which our Lord prescribeth in his perfect platform of prayer is a sufficient proof of the point; for he that knew what familiarity with God his children might warrantably use, teacheth them thus to pray to God,—'Our Father.'

God's indulgences towards us is the only ground of this prerogative. His desire is to do us good on all occasions, and in all our needs to help us.

Wherefore, that we may not be kept from him, and miss of that good which he intendeth to us, he affordeth us this admirable familiarity and comfortable liberty to come ourselves into his presence, and even into his bosom to pour forth our whole hearts. A prerogative this is whereby we are advanced above death, and above all things subject to corruption.<sup>2</sup>

Now I beseech you that ye receive not this grace of God in vain. It is a high honour, a great favour, proper to favourites. That which on our parts is hereupon expected, is, that we freely use this prerogative, and 'draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.' If God were not minded to receive our petitions, and to grant our requests, he would never afford us so free and friendly access

<sup>1</sup> Profecto cum deo confabulamur, quoties vacamus deprecationi.—*Chrys. de Orand. Domn.*, lib. i.

<sup>2</sup> Necessae est ut qui cum Deo familiaritatem habeat, superior evadat et morte, et omnibus que corruptioni sunt obnoxia.—*Chrys. loc. citat.*

into his chamber of presence. We do not, as Esther did by going into king Ahasuerus his inner court, put our lives in hazard by presenting our persons and prayers before the face of God, but we do that which much pleaseth him, and which will bring much peace to our own hearts. For as thereby we gain much assurance of God's fatherly favour to us, so we may be sure to have all our lawful and meet desires granted unto us. Ask, therefore, what thou wantest: 'Ask of God himself, who upbraideth not; ask in faith, nothing doubting, and it shall be given thee.' True faith will draw us unto God. The centurion, the more his faith increased, the more boldly and familiarly he approached to the Lord.<sup>1</sup> Compare Luke vii. 3, &c., with Mat. viii. 5, &c., and well weigh their manner of setting down the history of the centurion's coming to Christ, and it will appear that the centurion, in desire of his servant's recovery, first sent the elders of the Jews to entreat Christ to come to his sick servant. But so soon as they were gone, better thinking of his own unworthiness and of the power of Christ, he sent friends to stay his coming, and only by his word in absence to cure his servant. Yet farther meditating on Christ's goodness, to shew that it was not in pride that he sent others rather than went himself, he takes boldness and went himself to Christ.

#### Sec. 23. *Of fervency in prayer.*

The second branch of the prophet's manner of expressing his prayer is in this phrase, 'I beseech thee,' which importeth a kind of earnestness.<sup>2</sup> For the things which we fain would have we use to entreat for, as St Paul, who earnestly desired that the Galatians should return to him, thus expresseth his desire: 'I beseech you be as I am,' Gal. iv. 12. Hence learn, that

*Prayers made to God must be fervent.* A property this is appertaining to prayer much pressed in Scripture, and that under these and suchlike metaphors: 'crying,' Exod. xiv. 15; 'striving,' Rom. xv. 30; 'wrestling with God,' Gen. xxxii. 24; 'renting the heart,' Joel ii. 13; 'pouring out the

soul,' 1 Sam. i. 15; 'panting after, thirsting for,' Ps. xlii. 1, 2. Yea, it is expressly required ('be fervent in spirit,') and added as a proviso to effectual prayer, James v. 16.

Fervour in prayer is as fire put to powder, which makes it ascend high.<sup>1</sup> Yea, prayer, if it be made with intension, will be as armour of proof against all that can annoy a Christian. Fervency makes prayer so much the more prevalent, in that it manifesteth a high esteem of the thing for which we pray, truth of our desire, and faith in obtaining. Who will be earnest for that which he little regards? Where the desire is feigned, how can the heart be thoroughly affected or inflamed? If there be distrust, doubt and fear of prevailing, will not the spirit be heavy and the desire cold? But God is well pleased when he discerneth that men highly prize, heartily seek, and confidently expect his favour. True fervency, then, arising from all these, must needs be acceptable to God, and fervent prayers effectual, for they pierce heaven, whence they cannot return empty without blessing.

Let us now rouse up our spirits when we call upon God; let us entreat him, beseech him, importune him, not take any nay. Do as the widow did in the Gospel, Luke xviii. 2, &c., with the hard-hearted judge, give him no rest.<sup>2</sup> We have to deal with a father, with a tender-hearted father, who delights to hear his children beseech him, so as we may rest upon it that our beseechings shall not be in vain.

#### Sec. 24. *Of delivering a man's soul.*

The matter<sup>3</sup> of the prophet's prayer is in these words, 'Deliver my soul.' The thing desired, 'deliver,' importeth that he was in distress, which he acknowledged in the former verse, and that to be freed out of that distress he called upon God. The subject for which deliverance is desired, his soul, is synecdochically put for his whole person, body and soul; a synecdoche frequent in Scripture, so clear as translators do oft turn this very word, person. In this and other like places, soul is put for a man's whole person very emphatically: 1. To shew the

<sup>1</sup> Centurio, quo magis credidit, eo magis accessit ad Dominum.—*Aug. de Consens. Evn.*, lib. ii. cap. 20.

<sup>2</sup> נִחַח de hac voce vide infra, ver. 16, interpretatur rogo et deprecor.—*Jerome in hunc. loc.*

<sup>1</sup> Magna arina sunt oratio si cum intentione fuerit.—*Chrys. in cap. 11 ad Heb.*, Hom. 27.

<sup>2</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. secs. 141, 142, 143.

<sup>3</sup> See Sec. 18.

grievousness of the distress, it pierced to their very souls; 2. To shew the danger thereof, it brought their very souls, their life into danger; thus it appeareth that that which the prophet desired was to be freed from such a distress as endangered his life.

This kind of prayer, namely, for deliverance from evil, is called deprecation.

The evil from which he prayed to be delivered was such an one as touched his person; it was temporal, corporal. The description of it in the former verse sheweth as much.

It was also deadly; it brought his life into danger.

Three observable points may be gathered from this matter of the prophet's prayer.

I. Deprecation may and must be used.<sup>1</sup> Hereof see 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. sec. 32, &c., and the 'Guide to go to God,' on the 5th petition of the Lord's prayer, sec. 156.

II. Deprecation may and must be used against temporal evils, even such as touch our persons, our bodies as well as our souls. Let the places whereto reference is made in the former point be advisedly marked, and we shall find this branch also handled; yet further for this particular, see the 'Guide to go to God,' on the 4th petition, secs. 81, 83, 89, 93, 99, 100.

III. In danger of death deliverance may be sought of God.

Sec. 25. *Of praying for deliverance in danger of death.*

That it is lawful when our life is in hazard to seek help of God is evident, as by the frequent practice of them who well knew what was lawful for them to do, so by God's gracious hearing of their prayers, and delivering them from death. Here we have David's pattern.<sup>2</sup> Take for further instances in this case the examples of Moses at the Red Sea, Exod. xiv. 15; Jonah in the whale's belly, chap. ii. 1; Hezekiah when he had received from God a message of death, Isa. xxxviii. 1, 2; and the church for Peter when he was bound in prison, Acts xii. 5. Yea, the apostle oft requireth this duty to be per-

formed for him in his dangerous distresses; among other places especially note these, Rom. xv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 11; Heb. xiii. 19.

God is the Lord of life and death, Deut. xxxii. 39; 1 Sam. ii. 6, they are at his command to come, to go, to tarry. 'Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death,' Ps. lxxviii. 20, that is, deliverances from death and deadly danger. 'Hezekiah was sick unto death,' Isa. xxxviii. 1, yet the Lord preserved him from death. So hath the Lord oft delivered his servants from such dangers as their enemies supposed they could never have been delivered from.

'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God,' Heb. iii. 12. Oppose not seeming impossibilities to God's omnipotency. Say not in diffidence, as the Israelites did, Can God do this or that? Ps. lxxviii. 19, 20. Note the vengeance that followed the incredulous prince, 2 Kings vii. 17.

Seeing there is so good a ground of faith in the most desperate distress that in this world we can fall into, learn we to exercise our faith; and when we know not what to do, then with faithful Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 12, to fix them upon the Lord. It is one main end why God hath set in man's eyes a fifth muscle, whereas other creatures have but four, one to turn downwards, another to hold forwards, a third to turn the eye to the right hand, a fourth to the left hand; but no unreasonable creature can turn the eye upward; only man, that hath reason to convince him that there is a God above, hath also a fifth muscle in his eye to roll it up to God, and in all extremities to expect help from him.<sup>1</sup> Let us therefore on all occasions turn our eyes up to God, and call on him for help, and rest on him to be heard, so far forth as in his wisdom he seeth it to be fit for his own glory and our good. For true faith so trusteth to God's power as it subjecteth itself to God's will, like the leper that said to Christ, 'If thou wilt thou canst make me clean,' Mark i. 40. Or rather, like those three faithful and valiant servants of the Lord that said to the angry king, that threatened to cast them into a hot fiery furnace

<sup>1</sup> Lege Augustini precationem in afflictione, qua multa deprecatur mala.—*Medit.*, cap. 38.

<sup>2</sup> David perpetuis precationibus plurimos dolores pressuros eum removit. Ita et Job ad Deum precibus utebatur.—*Chrys. de Proc. Dei*, lib. iii.

<sup>1</sup> Quintum musculum si attrahas, oculus sursum vertitur, ut ejus auxilium cœlum intueretur.—*Columb. de re Anatom.*, lib. v. cap. 9.

if they would not worship his idol, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known to thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods.' Dan. iii. 17, 18. With this proviso of a contented submission of our desires to God's good pleasure we may in the most mortal sickness that can seize upon us, in prison, in captivity, when our enemies have us the most sure that they can imagine or desire in any other extremity, call upon God to deliver us; yea, and to deliver others also in the like cases, yea, though they lie at point of death. So also in times of public judgments, when the heavens threaten to destroy all the fruits of the land, when the plague most rageth, when the enemies have entered into our land, we may pray to God for deliverance.<sup>1</sup> No judgment can so far proceed as to exceed God's power in suppressing it, whereof this plague giveth good evidence; and this phrase, 'O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul,' manifesteth the affection of one earnestly craving the removal of the evil wherein he was. For, as we have heard before, he was in very great danger.

Sec. 26. *Of God's attributes of goodness.*

Ver. 5. *Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.*

III. The third<sup>1</sup> branch of the exemplification of God's kindness declareth the cause whereby God was moved to deliver him; and that is here attributed to God himself, only to him. He therefore taketh occasion to describe God, and that by three of his properties:

1. Gracious.
2. Righteous.
3. Merciful.

All these are further amplified by a particular application of them to that God in whom he trusted, and on whom he called, who is here set out,

1. By his title of excellency, Jehovah the Lord.
2. By the relation that saints have to him, our God.

<sup>1</sup> Quod dicit, hec est, deprecor, Domine, libera animam meam, non est enim vocantis, sed deprecantis affectus. In ingenti enim periculo constitutus est.—*Jerome in hunc loc.*

<sup>2</sup> See sec. 2.

The first attribute, gracious, (רַחֵם,) hath especial respect to that goodness which is in God himself. The root (רָחַן) whence it cometh signifieth to do a thing gratis, freely, of one's own mind and goodwill. This is that word which is used to set out the free grace and mere goodwill of God, thus, (אֲשֶׁר אֲהַיֶּה אֵת רַחֲמֵי אֵת) 'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,' Exod. xxxiii. 19. There is also an adverb (חַנּוּן) derived thence, which signifieth gratis, freely, as where Laban thus speaketh to Jacob, Shouldst thou serve me for nought? Thus is this word opposed to merit. And hereby the prophet acknowledged that the deliverance which God gave was for the Lord's own sake, upon no desert of him that was delivered.

The second attribute, righteous or just, (צַדִּיק), hath particular relation to the promise of God.

God's righteousness largely taken is the integrity or equity of all his counsels, words, and actions.

This is generally manifested by his equal ordering of all things. For the Lord is righteous in all his ways,' Ps. cxlv. 17. 'All his ways are judgment. A God of truth, without iniquity, just and right is he,' Dent. xxxii. 4.

Particularly is God's righteousness manifested in giving reward and taking revenge. Thus it is said to be 'a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble the saints; and to them that are troubled, rest,' 2 Thes. i. 6, 7. This is that righteousness whereabout the Lord maketh this challenge, 'Is not my way equal?' Ezek. xviii. 25. In regard hereof, the day of rendering to every one according to his works is styled, 'The day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,' Rom. ii. 5.

But the occasion of mentioning God's righteousness here in this place being to shew ground of his calling on God, and of God's delivering him, it must needs have respect to God's word and promise, and to God's truth in performing what he hath promised.<sup>1</sup>

For truth is an especial branch of righteousness. Thus the righteousness and faithfulness of God are put for one and the same thing; as where the psal-

<sup>1</sup> Justitia Dei convenienter veritas nominatur. Et sic dicitur in nobis veritas justitia.—*Iquin.*, Sum. 1, par. q. 21, art. 2. Ps. cxliiii. 1.

mist saith, 'I have not hid thy righteousness,' &c., by way of explanation he addeth, 'I have declared thy faithfulness,' Ps. xl. 10. In like respect the apostle joineth these two attributes together, as signifying one and the same thing, thus, 'He is faithful and just to forgive us,' 1 John i. 9. So as this sheweth that it was God's own word and promise, whereby he had bound himself, that moved him to afford succour. Yet so as his grace is the ground thereof, and his mercy accomplisheth it. Therefore mercy is twice expressed; righteousness once. Righteousness in the midst, enclosed with a double fence of mercy.<sup>1</sup>

The third attribute, merciful, (מרחם), hath apparent reference to misery; for misery is the proper object of mercy. And in this respect this word is oft translated compassion: as where Moses, speaking of the great misery whereinto Israel should be brought, saith, 'The Lord will have compassion upon thee,' Dent. xxx. 3, (רַחֵם). And when Hazael had much oppressed Israel, it is said, 'The Lord had compassion on them,' 2 Kings xiii. 23, (וַיִּרְחַם). The notation of the word importeth as much; for the same word in Hebrew (רָחַם) signifieth bowels and mercy: for mercy ariseth from the moving of the bowels at the sight of misery. Hence it is that the LXX translate mercies, bowels. As where the wise man saith, 'The mercies of the wicked are cruel,' Prov. xii. 10, (רַחֲמֵי), they, the bowels, (τὰ σπλάγχνα). And in the New Testament, 'to have compassion' is usually set out by a word that signifieth 'to have the bowels moved' (σπλάγχνα κινῆσαι); and 'the bowels of mercies' (σπλάγχνα ἐλεῶν, Luke i. 7, 8), is a phrase oft used.

*Object.* These phrases import passion, whereunto the divine essence is not subject.

*Ans.* Nor mercy, nor any other like property is attributed to God properly, as a passion, but tropically, to demonstrate that the effects of such affections do come from God.<sup>2</sup> Men that have bowels of compassion in them, and are truly affected with

the miseries of others, will be ready to afford them what help they can. So, because the Lord is ready to succour such as are in misery, he is said to be merciful, full of compassion, and to have bowels of mercies.

The first title, *Lord*, sets out the excellency of God.<sup>1</sup> Fit mention is here made thereof, to shew the blessed concurrence of greatness and goodness in God. Though he be Jehovah the Lord, yet is he gracious, and righteous, and merciful.

The second title, *our God*, manifesteth a peculiar relation betwixt him and the faithful that believe in him and depend on him, as this prophet did. And to them in an especial manner the Lord is gracious, which moved him thus to change the person; for where in the third person he had said before, the Lord is gracious, here, in the first person, our God: yet so as he appropriateth not this privilege to himself, but acknowledgeth it to be common to such as himself by the plural number, *our*.

This description of God is not by any particle of connexion tied to the words going before or following after, but fitly it may be referred to both: to the former, as shewing the ground of his calling upon God, because he is gracious, &c.; to the latter, as shewing the ground of God's delivering him, even God's own grace, &c.

Many comfortable instructions do flow from this description of God, as—

I. God's goodness ariseth from himself. He is gracious.

II. God is faithful in his promises. He is righteous.

III. God is moved with man's miseries. He is merciful.

IV. The great Lord is a good God. Jehovah the great Lord is gracious, &c.

V. The Lord is in special manner a God to the faithful. They may say to him and of him, Our God.

VI. God's goodness in peculiar appertaineth to his peculiar people. They that can say, Our God, may especially say, He is gracious, &c.

VII. Knowledge and faith in God's goodness encourage saints to call upon God; for, after the prophet had testified that he called on God, he thus describeth God to shew what made him bold so to do.

<sup>1</sup> Of this title *Lord*, see 'The Church's Conquest,' on Exod. xvii. 15, sec. 72.

<sup>1</sup> Bis misericordiana posuit, s. mel justitiam in medio: justiti est gemino septo inclusa misericordiae.—*Amb. in Orat. de Obi. Theodos.*

<sup>2</sup> Misericordia est Deo maxime attribuenda: tamen secundum effectum, non secundum passionis affectum, &c.—*Aquin., Sum. 1, par. q. 21, art. 3.*

VIII. God's goodness is the cause of the deliverances which he giveth to his people ; for so soon as he had set out the goodness of God, he addeth, The Lord preserveth, to shew that that was the cause of this.

Sec. 27. *Of God's graciousness.*<sup>1</sup>

I. *God's goodness ariseth from himself.* The attribute *graciously* importeth as much, and as much is expressly avouched in Scripture. What else doth this speech of God import, 'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious?' (Exod. xxxiii. 19.) And this, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake?' (Isa. xliii. 25.) And this, 'For mine own sake, for mine own sake will I do it?' (Isa. xlviii. 11.) And this, 'I was found of them that sought me not?' (Isa. lxxv. 1.) And many the like.

Whence should God's goodness arise if not from himself? What is in the creature to move God to be good and kind unto it? 'The creature hath nothing but what from God it hath received,' 1 Cor. iv. 7; what it hath can 'profit God nothing,' Job xxii. 2, 3; the most excellent is 'less than the least of God's mercies,' Gen. xxxii. 10; when it hath done all, it is an 'unprofitable servant,' Luke xvii. 10; it hath done nothing but duty, whereunto it was bound.

*Object.* Christ our Mediator is worthy to appear before God for us. He hath merited grace and favour. For his sake God doth the good which he doth to us.

*Ans.* 1. If we consider—1. Who Christ is, even the only begotten Son of God, very God. 2. Who gave Christ to be a Mediator for us, even God himself: 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,' &c., John iii. 16. 3. What moveth God to accept that which his Son hath done, what moveth him to accept thereof for us—namely, his grace: for, 'By his grace God maketh us accepted in his Beloved; in whom we have redemption, according to the riches of grace,' (Eph. i. 6, 7.) If we consider these three points, we shall find that God's grace and Christ's worth are not incompatible, such things as cannot agree together, but rather such as

do commend each other; yea, thus justice is mercy, and mercy is justice.<sup>1</sup>

Admirable comfort doth hence arise to us poor unworthy wretches; unworthy as wretches, more unworthy as mortal creatures, dust and ashes; most of all, unworthy as sinful creatures. Nothing in us can work in us any boldness to approach into God's presence, to expect any favour, any blessing from him; but matter enough there is in us to make us fly from his presence, as Adam did when he heard his voice in the garden; and to make us expect wrath and vengeance. Now then there being in us no matter of worth, no matter of hope, wherein lieth our comfort, what ground of confidence have we? Surely this, and none but this, 'The Lord is gracious;' for his own sake he doth good. But how may that appear! even by the objects of his goodness, who have no worth at all in themselves. For if he doth good to such as are unworthy thereof, he doth it not for their sakes, but for his own sake. Herein then lieth our comfort and confidence, that we approach to a gracious God, who to shew that what good he doth he doth for his own sake, doth it to such as are unworthy. Thus, when Adam by his transgression had spoiled himself of all that excellency which might make him acceptable to God, and had made him liable to the just vengeance of God, God came to him, not as a judge to condemn him, but as a physician to cure him. At the first word he raised him. For first he calls to him, and by his own name he calls to him, saying, 'Adam, where art thou?'<sup>2</sup> Thereby he intimates his mind to him. Wherefore we, though we know ourselves to be, as indeed we are, most unworthy of the least grace, yet we are bold to call, and hope for grace, because we call upon and hope in a gracious God.

Be now well instructed in this divine property, and let thy confidence be placed thereon. Learn when thou comest before God to go out of thyself, and utterly to renounce all confidence in thyself.

<sup>1</sup> *Liquet justitiam esse misericordiam, et misericordiam esse justitiam.—Ambr. in Orat. de Obiit. Theod.*

<sup>2</sup> *Deus ad Adamum venit sicut medicus ad ægrotum. A prima voce ipsum statim erexit: et jacentem, et timentem, et trementem confidere fecit, prior eum vocans ipse: quinimo non tantum prior vocans, sed etiam ex suo ipsum nomine appellans, et dicens, Adam ubi es, &c.—Chrys. ad Pop., Hom. 7.*

<sup>1</sup> See the 'Guide to go to God,' sec. 204. *Deus ex se sumit materiam, et velut quoddam seminarium miserendi.—Bern. in Natal. Dom., Serm. v.*

Plead with assurance of faith, plead this graciousness of God before him. It is of force to keep him that is well instructed therein, and placeth his confidence thereon, from despair. It affords more encouragement of drawing near to God than our unworthiness can give discouragement. Oft meditate thereon, and that seriously, especially when thou art about to make any supplication to God, and thou shalt find such a virtue therein, as thy cold heart will be so warmed, thy dull spirit so quickened, thy doubting mind so resolved, thy fearful conscience so encouraged, thy weak and wavering faith so settled, and thy perplexed soul so quieted thereby, as with much comfort thou mayest call upon God, and with much confidence expect a gracious answer from a gracious God. For he overcomes that trusteth to the grace of Christ, and presumeth not on his own power.<sup>1</sup>

This also is of special force to enlarge our hearts, and to open our mouths in the praises of God for the good things we receive from him. The more unworthy we are of favour, the more bound we are for favour. The more free a kindness is, the more worthy of praise it is. The donor that for his own sake doth a kindness, gains thereby all the glory thereof to himself.

Sec. 28. *Of God's righteousness as he is faithful.*<sup>2</sup>

II. *God is faithful in his promises.* In this respect is he said to be righteous, and to be 'a God of truth, just and right,' Deut. xxxii. 4.<sup>3</sup> The truth and faithfulness of God is as frequently set out in Scripture as any other of his properties; and that not only affirmatively, that he is 'true,' Rev. vi. 10, and 'faithful,' Deut. vii. 9; but also negatively, that 'God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?' Num. xxiii. 19. 'The strength of Israel will not lie,' 1 Sam. xv. 29.

God's honour is much engaged in his truth; the faith of his saints doth wholly rest thereupon. It is that which maketh his promises, threatenings, and

<sup>1</sup> Ille vincit qui gratiam Dei sperat, non qui de sua virtute presumit.—*Ambrosius, in Orat. de Obiit. Theodosii.*

<sup>2</sup> See Sec. 26.

<sup>3</sup> See 'Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii. part 6, sec. 27.

whole word to be the more regarded. A main difference lieth therein, not only betwixt him that 'when he speaketh a lie, speaketh of his own mind, being a liar and the father of it,' John viii. 44; but also betwixt vain unconstant man and the God of truth.

Suffer not any word to slip out of thy mouth, nor give entertainment to any thought that may any way impeach God's righteousness. If any such thought come into thy mind, say with the prophet, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee,' Jer. xii. 1. And remember the apostle's exprobration, 'O man, who art thou that repliest against God?' Rom. ix. 20. 'Let God be true, but every man a liar,' chap. iii. 4. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's words shall not pass away,' Mark xiii. 31.

Among other sins, 'take heed of an evil heart of unbelief,' Heb. iii. 12. 'This maketh the righteous Lord a liar,' 1 John v. 10. Infidelity,<sup>1</sup> as it is of all sins the most dangerous and damageable to man, so the most dishonourable to God, in that it is directly opposite to one of his most excellent properties, his truth and faithfulness, or righteousness.

For supporting thy faith, well mark whereon it may safely rest: even upon God's righteousness, as well as upon his mercy. On this ground did the apostle in faith expect the crown of righteousness, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, because the Lord from whom he expected it is a righteous judge; and the psalmist is bold to appeal to the righteousness of God, Ps. xxxv. 24. For we may be well assured that what God's goodness, grace, and mercy moved him to promise, his truth, his faithfulness, and righteousness will move him to perform.

*Object.* Why doth he then appeal from God's righteousness, and say, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant?' Ps. cxliii. 2.

*Ans.* 1. In regard of his own vileness and unworthiness. Thus he desireth not to be dealt with according to his own desert. 'If God contend with man, he cannot answer him one of a thousand,' Job ix. 3. 'If he mark iniquity, who shall stand?' Ps. cxxx. 3.

2. God's righteousness with one eye looketh on

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii. part 6, sec. 34.



his law, and beholdeth all sins as transgressions thereof, whereby all stand accursed, and so can no man be justified in his sight, Ps. cxliii. 2. But with another eye it looketh on God's promise, on his covenant, on Christ the Mediator of his covenant, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, John i. 7. Thus it maketh us with strong confidence to expect till we come to possess what is promised. In this respect the psalmist, where his plea is the multitude of God's tender mercies, professeth and promiseth to 'sing aloud of his righteousness,' Ps. li. 1, 14.

Make use of this righteousness of God, by trusting to it, and by pleading it before God, and sharpening thy prayers in due meditation thereon; as he that said, 'O Lord, in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness,' Ps. cxliii. 1. In like manner say thou, I put no confidence in myself, but I desire thy truth and righteousness, that it may be merciful to me.<sup>1</sup>

Sec. 29. *Of God's mercifulness.*

III. *God is moved with man's miseries.* This is that which this attribute, merciful,<sup>2</sup> applied to God, doth most principally set out. And this is the reason why 'bowels of mercy,' Luke i. 78, are metaphorically applied to God, intimating that his bowels are moved, and do yearn again at the miseries of his saints; as God himself said of Ephraim, (whom he styles his dear son, and pleasant child,) 'My bowels are moved for him,' Jer. xxxi. 20. Whereupon, when the Lord seemed to shew no mercy, thus saith the prophet to him, 'Where is the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me?' Isa. lxiii. 15. To like effect it is said that God's soul was grieved for the misery of Israel, Judges x. 16. And the tenderest compassions that are in any are applied to God, as of father and mother. For 'like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him,' Ps. ciii. 13. 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I (saith the Lord) comfort you,' Isa. lxvi. 13. Yea, to shew that in these comparisons there is no comparison, God's compassions

are said so to exceed theirs, as in comparison theirs is none at all: as where the church thus saith, 'Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel know us not: thou art our Father, our Redeemer,' Isa. lxiii. 16. And God himself thus, '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 not I forget thee,' Isa. xlix. 15. And the psalmist thus, 'When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up,' Ps. xxvii. 10. Well therefore may he be styled the Father of mercies, whose property it is always to have pity. How great this mercy of God is I know not. That it is very great, I well know.<sup>1</sup>

This tenderness over his children the Lord is pleased to shew, to encourage them in their misery to call to him for mercy, and to rest upon him for help and succour.

Oh let this manifestation of the Lord's merciful disposition towards us provoke us in all time of need to seek help of him; and the greater our misery is, the more confidently expect succour from him. For he that hath bowels of mercy, the greater the misery is wherein he seeth any to lie, the more is he moved to afford help.<sup>2</sup> David, therefore, out of the depths cried unto the Lord, Ps. cxxx. 1; Jonah also 'prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, and said, I cried by reason of my affliction unto the Lord,' Jonah ii. 1, 2. Thus one depth crieth to another; a depth of misery to a depth of mercy—and many are the mercies of the Lord, because many are the miseries of the righteous, out of all which he will deliver them.<sup>3</sup>

Learn here of beggars how to procure succour and relief. Lay open thy sores, make known thy need, discover all thy misery, make not thy case better than it is. Beggars by experience find that the more miserable they appear to be, the more they are pitied, the more succoured; and yet the mercies of the most merciful men are but as drops

<sup>1</sup> Bene dicitur Pater misericordiarum, ejus proprium est semper misereri.—*Berni, in Natal. Dom.*, Serm. v. Quanta sit misericordia Dei, nescio: quod grandis sit, novi.—*Chrys. in Ps. l.*, Hom. 2. <sup>2</sup> See Sec. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Misericordie Domini multe, quia multe tribulationes justorum, et de omnibus his liberabit eos Dominus.—*Berni, loc. citat.*

<sup>1</sup> Non confido mihi, sed ego veritatem et justitiam tuam peto, ut ipsa mei miseretur.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. cxlii.*

<sup>2</sup> See Sec. 26.

in comparison of the oceans of God's mercies : and among men there are many, like the priest and Levite in the parable, Luke x. 30-32. that can pass by a naked, wounded man, left half dead, and not pity him nor succour him. But God, like the merciful Samaritan, hath always compassion on such as with sense of their misery are forced to cry out and crave help. Read how Job, chap. vi. and vii. ; David, Ps. xxxviii. 3, &c. ; Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 10, &c., and other like saints poured out their complaints before the Lord, and withal observe what mercy was shewed them of the Lord, and you may have in them both good patterns how to behave yourselves in like cases, and good encouragement so to do. This is it which God expecteth of us, and whereunto he desireth to bring us, that seeing our own emptiness and insufficiency, and the impotency and disability of others to help us, we should in all humility fly to his mercy.<sup>1</sup>

Sec. 30. *Of God's greatness and goodness agreeing in one.*

IV. *The great Lord is a good God.* He that is Jehovah, the Eternal, that hath his being of himself, and is all-sufficient in himself, even he is gracious and righteous and merciful. His greatness is no way any hindrance to his goodness, but rather a help thereto. Where this incomprehensible name of his is, for emphasis' sake, twice together proclaimed, and another word added thereto that sheweth him to be a mighty God, there the titles of his mercy, grace, patience, and goodness are also proclaimed ; thus, 'The Lord, the Lord, the strong God, merciful and gracious,' &c., Exod. xxxiv. 6. (יהוה יהוה אל רחום) again, where Moses thus setteth out God's excellency, 'The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, a great God, mighty and terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward,' he addeth in demonstration of his goodness, 'He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment,' Deut. x. 17, 18 ; and in that perfect pattern of prayer where the Lord is set out in his high and glorious palace in heaven,

<sup>1</sup> Hoc erat certe quod querebat Deus, hoc erat ad quod nos perducere satagebat : ut videntes defectum nostrum, et quod non est nobis auxilium aliud, ad ejus misericordiam, tota humilitate curramus.—*Bern. in Quadreg.*, Ser. v.

there is he styled 'our Father,' Mat. vi. 9 ; and in most of the solemn prayers of the saints recorded in Scripture, there are express titles of both these divine properties, God's greatness and goodness, whereby they shewed that, notwithstanding that knowledge which they had of God's excellent majesty, they believed him to be a gracious and merciful Father, tendering them as impotent succourless babes, and thereupon, though in regard of that throne of glory whereon he sitteth, they are affrighted, as Isaiah was, Isa. vi. 5 ; yet knowing that throne of glory to be also a throne of grace, a mercy-seat, they are emboldened to approach thereunto that they may 'obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,' Heb. iv. 16.

Both these are revealed to be in God, to manifest the absolute perfection of his excellency ; for, there is an excellency in both, and by the concurrence of both is excellency perfected. Greatness without goodness might give suspicion of tyranny. Goodness without greatness might import impotency. But a mixture of goodness with greatness demonstrates a willing ability, and an able willingness ; from whence what may not be hoped for and expected ?

Who now may be compared unto God, or supposed to be like unto the Lord ? Among men greatness makes them scornful ; inasmuch as it is said of majesty and love, that they agree not well together, nor abide in the same seat.<sup>1</sup> But God's goodness is as his greatness—both incomprehensible, both infinite.

On this ground whensoever we are affrighted, and made to tremble through the apprehension of God's glorious majesty, perfect purity, and fiery jealousy, we may through due consideration of his grace and mercy, comfort ourselves, and say, as Manoah's wife once did, 'The Lord would not have shewed us such things,' Judges xiii. 23, he would not have made himself known to be a gracious Lord, righteous and merciful, if with the brightness of his glory he had meant to dazzle and confound us. A thorough understanding of this point, and a serious meditation thereon, is very requisite for such as are so base, so foul, and so unworthy

<sup>1</sup> Non bene conveniunt, nec in una sede morantur Majestas et Amor.—*Ovid. Metamorph.*, lib. ii.

as we are, the Lord being so glorious, so pure, so excellent every way as he is.

If they that sit on thrones in earth, who are decked with majesty, and have authority over others, would herein shew themselves children of their heavenly Father, and be gracious and merciful as he is, their subjects, and such as are under them, would be more encouraged to make known their grievances, and they themselves be in more honour, and gain more assurance to their own souls of God's favour and mercy towards them. This part of imitation is so much the rather to be observed, because the Lord himself doth on this very ground press it. For having shewed what the great God doth, it is thereupon thus inferred, 'Love ye therefore the stranger,' Deut. x. 17-19.

Sec. 31. *Of the particular relation betwixt God and saints.*

V. *The Lord is in special manner a God to the faithful.* A faithful one was this psalmist, who in relation to himself, and such as himself was, saith of the Lord, our God;<sup>1</sup> which is so much the more observable, because in the former part of the verse he spake of the Lord in the third person, but here he speaketh of him in the first, our God. Where God saith, 'All the earth is mine.' Exod. xix. 5; Deut. x. 14, 15; of the faithful that keep his covenant he addeth, 'Ye shall be a particular treasure unto me above all people.' To like effect St Paul saith that God is the Saviour of all, specially of those that believe, 1 Tim. iv. 10. These are they of whom the Lord saith, 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people,' Jer. xxxi. 33; and to whom Christ saith, 'I go to my God and your God,' John xx. 17; and whom St Peter styleth 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,' 1 Pet. ii. 9.

The Lord is indeed a most supreme and absolute sovereign over all. He is the creator, preserver, and governor of all: 'In him we live, move, and have our being,' Acts xvii. 28. 'Of him, and through him, and to him are all things,' Rom. xi. 36. So as in this general extent he is the God of all. But yet in a peculiar respect, as he bears

an especial affection to the faithful, and takes an especial care of them, preserving the world principally for their sakes, and ordering all things to their good, they, they alone may style him 'our God.'

The ground hereof is thus expressed by the apostle, 'Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's,' 1 Cor. iii. 23. In the chiefest and principallest respect that can be, the Lord is 'the God of Jesus Christ,' Eph. i. 17. But Christ and the faithful are one, John xvii. 21; 1 Cor. xii. 12; one mystical body, and his God is their God, John xx. 17.

Take notice of your prerogative, O you saints and faithful ones! Take notice thereof as of a matter of admiration, consolation, gratulation, direction.

1. It is a matter that can never be sufficiently admired, that the great Lord of all should by a special bond of relation tie himself unto us, to become our God. In man there is no difference, Rom. iii. 22, 23, 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;' who then maketh us to differ? 1 Cor. iv. 7. As on this ground it was said to the Jews, 'The Lord set his love on you because the Lord loved you,' Deut. vii. 7, 8; so of the Gentiles, 'God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love where-with he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us,' &c., Eph. ii. 4, 5. They know not God, whose hearts are not ravished herewith.

2. What sounder and greater ground of comfort can the creature have, than that the Lord of all should in special be his God? May he not on this ground expect all needful and sufficient protection and provision? Need he fear any enemies? Needeth he the favour of any friends? If a mortal man might say to his wife perplexed for want of children, 'Am not I better to thee than ten sons?' 1 Sam. i. 8; how much more truly and comfortably may the Lord say to such as are in any manner of perplexity or extremity, to such as are destitute of any outward comforts or helps, 'Am not I better to you than all these?' What can be more desired than the Lord to be our God? Wherein may we more solace ourselves? wherein may we more confidently place our rest? On this ground the psalmist as a type, Christ himself as the truth, said, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant

<sup>1</sup> Of this correlative 'our,' as relation passeth betwixt God and man, see the 'Guide to go to God,' sec. 11, 12, &c.

places; yea, I have a goodly heritage,' Ps. xvi. 5, 6.

3. We ought (as it followeth in the said psalm) to 'bless the Lord,' Ps. xvi. 7, for this his special favour to us. Oft doth the psalmist make this his ground of praising God, and saith, 'I will praise thee, O God, my God,' Ps. xliii. 4, lix. 17, lxxviii. 19, 20, xcix. 5, civ. 33, and cxviii. 28. It is the best acknowledgment that we can give of our answerable respect to our God, and the best recompense we can give to our God, to praise him.

4. Many and weighty are other duties, for the performance whereof this special relation betwixt God and us giveth good directions, and which saints of old have thereupon performed, as in Scripture they are recorded.

(1.) To love God, Ps. xviii. 1, 20. Herein God manifesteth his special love to us; and doth not such love of the Creator require love from the creature to him?

(2.) To delight in the place where he manifesteth his presence, Ps. lxxxiv. 2, 3. His special respect to us in being our God sheweth his delight in us; should not we, then, delight in beholding his presence?

(3.) To wait for him, Ps. lxxix. 3. Surely our God will come, and will not tarry beyond that season wherein he knoweth it to be most fit to come unto us.

(4.) Confidently to trust on him, Ps. xxxi. 14, and xci. 2. He that is God can effect what we expect; he that is our God will do it so far as it may be for our good.

(5.) To take due notice of his works, Ps. cv. 5-7. For our God worketh all for our good, and for strengthening our faith he would have us to remember them.

(6.) To exalt him, Ps. xcix. 9, civ. 1, and cxv. 3, and to set forth his glory with the uttermost of our power. It is the glory of our God.

(7.) To fall down before him, Ps. xcv. 6, 7, and to worship him. Whom shall we adore, if we adore not our God?

(8.) To hearken unto his voice, Ps. l. 7, and to delight in doing his will, Ps. xl. 8. Thus shall we shew ourselves to be planted in the courts of our God, Ps. xcii. 13.

(9.) To be jealous against his enemies, Ps. lxxxiii. 13. For how can we suffer our God to be despised, or any way dishonoured, and not be moved thereat?

(10.) To walk worthy of our God, Jer. xxxii. 38, 39; Ezek. xxxvi. 27; which is done when we carry ourselves as becometh his people. For oft where promise is made that God will be their God, Zech. xiii. 9, this is inferred thereupon, they shall be his people, 2 Cor. vi. 16.

These and other like duties, which, by virtue of this prerogative, are in God's word required of us, will give evidence that the Lord is indeed our God, and that we in this our God are blessed: for, 'Blessed are they whose God is the Lord,' Ps. xxxiii. 12, and cxlv. 15.

Sec. 32. *Of God's goodness to his people especially.*

VI. *God's goodness in peculiar appertaineth to his peculiar people.* They whose God the Lord is, they have most cause to say, 'Our God is merciful.'<sup>1</sup> Of such saith the Holy Ghost, 'Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself above all the nations that are upon the earth,' Deut. xiv. 2; 'He hath not dealt so with any nation,' Ps. cxlvii. 20. True it is that the Lord 'maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust,' Mat. v. 45; but properly to have the Lord to be gracious and merciful is their prerogative whose God he is: for none but they can make title to Christ, in and by whom only God's fatherly grace and mercy is conveyed to children of men.

Fret not, O people of God, fret not at anything that they who are not God's people do enjoy. They are but as husks given to swine, with which the prodigal would fain have filled his belly when he was out of his father's house, in comparison of that bread whereof his father's hired servants had enough. Advisedly, therefore, meditate on the excellency and benefit of that grace and mercy that is treasured up for God's people, that therewith you may be satisfied, and therein rest contented.

And ye who have yet no assurance that the Lord

<sup>1</sup> Consolamini, dicit dominus vester. Quibus, putas? Plane populo suo. Ipse enim saluum faciet, non quoscunque, sed populum suum, &c.—*Bern. in Nat. Dom., Seru. v.*

is your God, inquire after the means whereby you may be made partakers of this privilege, to have the Lord for your God, and be conscionable and diligent in the use of those means which God hath sanctified for effecting this blessed communion. To this purpose note what the law saith: 'When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it, and he shall be as one that is born in the land,' Exod. xii. 48. Subject yourselves, therefore, to the holy ordinances and discipline of the Lord, and he will be your God, and ye shall be his people. I would to God that we, beloved, had always a mind to be in the number of this people which their own Lord God doth comfort and take such special care of.<sup>1</sup>

Sec. 33. *Of the encouragement which God's goodness giveth to call upon him.*

VII. *Knowledge and faith in God's goodness encourageth saints to call upon God.* This encouraged the prophet here to call upon God, as this inference of the description of God's goodness upon his praying to God sheweth. God himself on this ground inciteth them so to do. For where he saith, 'I am the Lord thy God,' he addeth, 'Open thy mouth wide,'—that is, earnestly, confidently, call upon me,—'and I will fill it,' Ps. lxxxix. 10, and lxxxix. 26; I will satisfy thy desire to the full. Answerably saints on this ground have been bold so to do, and that with all manner of prayer—as petition for good things, deprecation for removing evil things, and for preservation against evil men, and imprecation also against them. They have been bold also, on this confidence that the Lord was their God, to appeal to him for trial of their integrity.

This relation for the gracious and merciful Lord to be our God, what grace, mercy, favour, protection, acceptation, blessing, doth it not promise? What will he, what can he deny us, that vouchsafeth to be our God? And if such be his mind to us, may not we boldly and confidently call upon him?

<sup>1</sup> Utinam nos dilectissimi in eo populo inveniri semper optemus, quem consolatur Dominus Deus suus.—*Bern., loc. citat.*

Be instructed hereby how to approach to the throne of grace, namely, with knowledge of, and faith in that special favour which God beareth to thee, that thou mayest in some assurance thereof say unto him, O our God. A particular persuasion of that particular relation which is betwixt God and us, is then especially requisite when we pray unto him. This will make us in our greatest extremity to say, Being pressed with the weight of miseries, I have hope in no other but in the mercy of God.<sup>1</sup>

Sec. 34. *Of God's goodness moving him to deliver his people.*

VIII. *God's goodness is the cause of the deliverances which he giveth to his people.* The prophet, to shew his acknowledgment hereof, setteth out a description of the goodness of God immediately before the mention of that deliverance which God gave. This hath ever been acknowledged by such as were well instructed about the mind and ways of God. 'Thou in thy mercy,' said Moses to God, 'hast led forth the people,' &c., Exod. xv. 13. 'In his love and in his mercy,' saith Isaiah, 'he redeemed them,' chap. lxxiii. 9. This phrase, 'Ye shall be redeemed without money,' importeth as much, Isa. lii. 3. Where the psalmist maketh express mention of sundry deliverances which God gave to his people, at the particular expression of every of them he thus closeth, 'For his mercy endureth for ever,' Ps. cxxxvi. 11, &c. And hereupon the redeemed of the Lord are enjoined to say, 'The Lord is good; for his mercy endureth for ever,' Ps. cvii. 1, 2.

It was before shewed<sup>2</sup> that his goodness moved God to choose a peculiar people to himself: that goodness ever remaining the same, without alteration, it moveth him to provide for them, and to deliver them according to their needs.

Hereby we learn, when we seek deliverance of God, what to plead, and wherewith to strengthen our faith. Not anything in ourselves, nor in any other creature, but to say, as the Holy Ghost teacheth us, 'O Lord, redeem us for thy mercies' sake,' Ps. xlv. 26. Let the reasons therefore which in prayer thou dost press to move God withal, be taken from

<sup>1</sup> See the 'Guide to go to God,' sec. 12. Pressus pondere malorum, in nullo alio nisi in Dei misericordia spem habeo.—*Jerome, lib. xvii. Comment. in Isa. lxxiii.*

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 31, 32.

God himself, and from those properties which set out his goodness.<sup>1</sup> On these meditate when thou wouldst have thy heart enlarged with earnestness to call on God. And when thou observest his wrath withheld, so as thou dost not perish, know and acknowledge that it is not through any merit of thine, but his own mercy.

Sec. 35. *Of the Lord's preserving the simple.*

Ver. 6. *The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.*

IV. The fourth branch<sup>2</sup> of the exemplification of God's kindness expresseth the deliverance which God gave him. This is set down,

1. In a general (*κατὰ θεῖον*) consideration of God's dealing with others: 'The Lord preserveth the simple.'

2. In a particular (*κατ' ἐπιθεῖον*) application thereof to himself: 'I was brought low, and he helped me.'

In the general there is distinctly noted,

1. The author, or deliverer, the Lord.
2. The action, or kind of deliverance, preserveth.
3. The object, or persons delivered, the simple.

1. The Deliverer is described by that magnificent name Jehovah, a name proper to God alone.<sup>3</sup>

II. The kind of deliverance is expressed under this word preserveth, *שָׁמַר*, which most properly signifieth to prevent, or keep away that which is like to fall upon one, and that before it hath happened: in which sense the Lord thus forewarneth the Israelites, 'Preserve yourselves from the accursed thing.' Joshua vi. 18, *שָׁמְרוּ*. A noun coming from this verb signifieth a 'watchtower.' Isa. xxi. 8, *מִשְׁמֹרֵי*, a place to descry a danger for preventing it. Yet the application of that which is intended by this word in the other part of this verse, importeth a pulling out of that danger whereinto he was fallen. Here therefore occasion is offered to inquire after the several kinds of preserving or delivering from evil. This is done,

1. By preventing them, Mat. ii. 13.
2. By putting them off to other times, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26.

<sup>1</sup> See the 'Guide to go to God,' sec. 204. Non tuo merito, sed mea misericordia foream meum distuli, ne penitus interires.—*Jerome, Comment.*, lib. xiii., in Isa. xlviii.

<sup>2</sup> See sec. 2.

<sup>3</sup> See the 'Church's Conquest' on Exod. xvii. 15, sec. 72.

3. By enabling men to bear them, 1 Cor. x. 13; 2 Cor. iv. 8. &c.

4. By affording means of ease, Gen. xxxix. 21.

5. By doing the more good for the evil which men suffer, 2 Sam. xvi. 12; Job xlii. 10.

6. By turning the evil itself into good, Gen. i. 20.

7. By taking away the evil which lieth on them, Judges ii. 18.

8. By taking them away from the evil, Isa. lvii. 1.

III. The word by which the persons delivered are described (*simple*, פְּתָאִים) is derived from a verb (פָּתַח) that signifieth to persuade, and in the passive to be persuaded. And because by persuasions men are oft deceived and seduced to evil, in the active it oft signifieth to beguile, and in the passive to be beguiled; as where the Lord said, 'Who shall persuade (1 Kings xxii. 20, מִי יִפְתֶּה) or entice<sup>1</sup> Ahab?' an evil lying spirit answered, 'I will persuade.' To his ruin he persuaded him; thereby, therefore, he enticed, he deceived him. To like purpose saith the law, 'Take heed that your heart be not deceived,' Deut. xi. 16, פָּתַח, (word for word *persuaded*.) Answerably the word here used, *simple*, is oft put for such as are witless, easily persuaded,<sup>2</sup> enticed, deceived. So doth the wise man decipher him, 'The simple believeth every word,' Prov. xv. 16. Thus he is opposed to a prudent, wary man. For in the latter part of the verse it followeth, 'But the prudent man looketh well to his going.' And a little after, 'The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge,' Prov. xv. 18. Thus the word *simple* setteth out an evil man. But it is also used in a better sense, and signifieth such a one as will be persuaded to yield to admonition or correction, and is opposed to a scorner; for, 'Smite a scorner and the simple will beware,' Prov. xix. 25. Yea, it is also put for such as are in the world's account *simple*—that is, without craft and guile—who, being in distress and destitute of human helps, with a single and simple heart commit their estate wholly and only to the Lord, and so quietly and patiently rest on him for succour. That it is here so to be taken is evident by the prophet's particular application of this general care of God over

<sup>1</sup> Targum., יִמְעִי, decipiet; Tremel. and Jun., pelliciet.

<sup>2</sup> פְּתָאִים vel פְּתִי, persuadibilis. Cui quidvis facile persuadetur.

them whom he styleth simple to his own particular case.

Out of these words, 'The Lord preserveth the simple,' so opened, arise these three instructions :

I. God is a deliverer from distress.

II. God can any way deliver. He can either keep safe from danger, as the word, שָׁמַר, most properly implieth; or pull out of danger, when men are fallen into it, as the latter part of this verse importeth.

III. God taketh most care of them that, being otherwise least cared for, wholly depend on him. Such are the simple here meant.

I. Of the first of these, see the 'Guide to go to God,' on the 6th Petition, sec. 188.

Sec. 36. *Of God's manifold preservation.*

II. *God can any way deliver.* Before the evil come he can prevent it, and preserve his saints from it; and when it is come, he can many ways save and deliver, as by the particular instances produced in the former section is evident. The two parts of the last petition of the Lord's Prayer give good proof hereof. In the former part we are to pray for prevention from evil (lead us not into temptation); in the latter for redemption out of evil (but deliver us from evil).

They who have any understanding of the divine properties of God, as of his omniscience, (whereby he knoweth all things before-hand,) omnipresence, (whereby he filleth all places,) omnipotency, (whereby he is able to do what he will,) and unsearchable wisdom, (whereby he can order all things to the best,) cannot make question of this, that the Lord can preserve as he please.

As in our judgments we give consent to the truth hereof, so let us answerably call on God, and depend on him for succour as occasion is given. By reason of the manifold necessities whereunto we are subject, it is requisite that God be by us solicited in frequent supplications, that so his manifold deliverances may appear.<sup>1</sup> Wherefore, when we have cause to fear any evil before it be fallen out, pray to have it prevented and kept off; when it is fallen out, pray

to have it removed or mitigated, or to have sufficient strength to bear it, and a good issue out of it. 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28; safely, therefore, may we rest upon God, to be so preserved by him as shall best make to our good. Only that we may with the more assured confidence rest on him, let us weigh what kind of persons he thus preserveth, even the simple.

Sec. 37. *Of the simple ones whom the Lord preserveth.*

III. *God taketh most care of them that, being otherwise least cared for, wholly depend on him.*<sup>1</sup> These are in a good sense simple ones; simple in the world's account, and simple in their own eyes. Such as he that said, 'I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people,' Ps. xxii. 6. And again, 'I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh on me,' Ps. xl. 17. These are those 'poor ones of a contrite spirit on whom the Lord looketh,' Isa. lxvi. 2. Of such fatherless is God a father: and of such widows a judge. Read Ps. lxxviii. 5, and cxlvi. 7, 8, 9. Yea, read observantly the histories of the Gospel, and well weigh who they were to whom Christ in the days of his flesh afforded succour, and ye shall find them to be such simple ones as we have shewed to be here intended.

By such objects the free grace and merciful mind of the Lord is best manifested. Their case being most miserable, in regard of human helps, the greater doth God's mercy appear to be. And there being in them nothing to procure favour or succour from God, for in their own and others' eyes they are nothing, what God doth for them evidently appeareth to be freely done.

I. Behold here how of all others they who seem to have least cause to trust on God have most cause to trust on him. Simple persons, silly wretches, despicable fools in the world's account, who have not subtle brains, or crafty wits to search after indirect means, have, notwithstanding, enough to support them, in that they are such as the Lord preserveth. Now, who knoweth not that 'it is better to trust in

<sup>1</sup> Ex occasione frequentium necessitatum, crebris necesse est precationibus Deum ab homine frequentari, &c.—*Bern. de Diligent. Deo.*

<sup>1</sup> Inops clamat, et exaudit Dominus. Quomodo clamabo inops? Ut etsi habes aliquid, non inde presumas de viribus tuis, ut intelligas te indigentem, &c.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. xxxiii. Conc. 2.*

the Lord than to put confidence in man; it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes,' Ps. cxviii. 8, 9.

2. As thou puttest not thy confidence in other men, so take heed of placing it on thyself. 'Lean not unto thine own understanding,' Prov. iii. 5. Self-confidence makes self-conceited: whence ariseth pride and arrogancy, that makes men odious to God and man. True grace makes men modest and humble. Hereby have all the saints in all ages been approved and accepted of God.<sup>1</sup>

3. Be therefore confident ye simple ones. If any shall upbraidingly say to you, 'Flee as a bird to your mountain,' confidently reply, 'In the Lord put we our trust,' Ps. xi. 1. If you lie among them that are set on fire, 'even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword,' Ps. lvii. 4. hold out this shield against them all. This is that 'shield wherewith ye may quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,' Eph. vi. 16. God keepeth such as are little or simple, or such as in a humble affection confess themselves to be such. Good and blessed, therefore, is that humility or simplicity which delivereth those that are in danger, and raiseth up those that fall.<sup>2</sup> They may be secure. For safe are they whom the Lord keepeth.

4. This is also a good ground of plea before God, that we are simple, destitute of all help, but in God. Plead it therefore you that are such. Say unto God, 'I am poor and needy, but the Lord preserveth the simple,' Ps. xl. 17. The inference which the prophet himself doth here in this verse make thereupon importeth as much.

5. Such evidences of goodness as these are, are also for our imitation. We must be 'merciful, as our Father is merciful,' Luke vi. 36; and in shewing mercy have respect rather to the object of our mercy, to the person that stands in need of our mercy, than to ourselves. So as if we see a simple one, one succourless, not able to help himself, and

destitute of all other help, then to perform the part of the pitiful Samaritan, though otherwise he be a stranger to us. From this very ground is this duty pressed in the law. For where it thus setteth out God's goodness, 'The Lord your God regardeth not persons, he doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and the widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment,' Deut. x. 18, 19, it maketh this inference, 'love ye therefore the stranger.' This kind of mercy is most divine; and herein especially do mortal men shew themselves like to their heavenly Father, when they succour the succourless, and that readily and freely. 'If ye love them which love you, or do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same,' Luke vi. 32, 33. They were 'the poor, the fatherless, and him that had none to help,' Job xxix. 12, through succouring of whom Job received much comfort in his great distress.

6. What now may we think of such as are hard-hearted, and that against the simple? that take advantage from their impotency to scorn them, to wrong them, to oppress them? A heavy woe is denounced against them. They are put into the catalogue of cursed ones. This was a principal cause of the Jews' captivity, and of the destruction of Ammon, Moab, Edom, Tyrus, and other nations. Cruelty to the simple is as diabolical, as mercy to them is divine. What then can be expected of such cruel ones, but to be at length in Dives his case?

Sec. 38. *Of God's saving such as are brought low.*

XI. The particular application of God's general pity to others, the application, I say, thereof to the prophet himself, followeth in these words:

'I was brought low, and he helped me.' The word translated brought low, דלה à רלותי, properly signifieth to be drawn dry. The metaphor is taken from ponds, or brooks, or rivers that are clean exhausted and dried up, where water utterly faileth. Thus doth Isaiah use this word, 'The brooks shall be emptied and dried up,' Isa. xix. 6. דללו והרבנו יארי. Being applied to man, it setteth out such an one as is spent, utterly wasted, or, as we use to speak, clean gone; who hath no

<sup>1</sup> Quo magis virtutibus locupletamur eo magis humiliemur. Hinc enim omnes sancti probati fuerunt et Deo accepti.—*Chrys. in Gen. xi., Hom. 31.*

<sup>2</sup> Deus custodit parvulos; aut certe eos qui se parvulos humili confitentur affectu. Bona igitur humilitas, que liberat periclitantes, jacentes erigit.—*Amb. de Obi. Theod.*



ability to help himself, no means of help, no hope of help from others.

The other word whereby the succour which God afforded is expressed, and translated *helped*, יִרְשִׁיעַ אֱלֹהִים, signifieth such help as freeth out of danger. It is usually translated to save. Where the prophet saith, 'Israel shall be saved with an everlasting salvation.' Isa. xlv. 17, he useth this word. From this word the proper name of him, who 'is able to save to the uttermost,' Heb. vii. 25, even Jesus, יֵשׁוּעַ, is derived.

The copulative particle, *and*, that knitteth the prophet's distress, and God's release together, intimateth the time when God saved him; even when he was at the lowest. 'I was brought low and he helped me.'

Four points are here offered to our consideration.

1. The case wherein the prophet was. I was brought low.

2. The kind of help. He saved me.

3. The time when God afforded that help. When he was brought low.

4. The inference of God's particular dealing with him, upon God's general dealing with others. 'The Lord preserveth the simple,' that is the general; 'I was brought low and he saved me,' this is the particular.

These four considerations afford four useful observations.

I. No extremity exceeds God's ability. He can raise him that is brought low,—that is, as an exhausted pond,—that hath no more strength in himself than a dried pit hath water.

II. God's succour is salvation. He saveth, and setteth free from danger, those whom he undertakes to help.

III. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Then is it the fittest time for God to help, when man is in the greatest distress.

IV. Due observation of God's mercy to others maketh men in like cases to acknowledge God's mercy to themselves. He that observed how God used to preserve the simple, could say when he himself was brought low, 'The Lord saved me.' The particular application to himself of God's general pity to others occasioneth this doctrine.

### Sec. 39. Of the extremities wherein God helpeth.

I. *No extremity exceeds God's ability.*<sup>1</sup> He can deliver even from instant death. To believe as much is an evidence of a strong faith. In sees. 15 and 16 many deadly dangers and desperate distresses of the saints are produced; observe the issue which God gave to them all, and you shall find by real evidences that God was able to help and save in them all. For so indeed he did. The vision of the dry bones that came together, and were covered with sinews, flesh, and skin, and lived, was shewed to Ezekiel, to assure the church of God's ability to help in any extremity. For where the house of Israel said, 'Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts,' the Lord made this answer, 'I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves,' Ezek. xxxvii. 11, &c.

To settle the faith of the prophet Jeremiah herein, the Lord thus puts him in mind of his almighty power, 'Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me?' Jer. xxxii. 27. 'That which with men is impossible, is not so with God; for with God all things are possible.' Mark x. 27. Though he have set bounds to his creatures beyond which they cannot go, yet can none set bounds to him; 'Our God is in the heavens; he doth whatsoever he will,' Ps. cxv. 3. Read more hereof in Hannah's song, 1 Sam. ii. 1, &c., and in Ps. cxiii.

Of sundry duties and comforts arising from a due consideration of the foresaid power of God, see 'The Guide to go to God,' sees. 213, 214; and of other instructions arising from the help which God affords in man's extremity, see the next section but one to this.

### Sec. 40. Of God's perfect preservation.

II. *God's succour is salvation.* It freeth out of all danger. Thus much intended Moses, when, the Israelites despairing of all help, he thus said to them, 'Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord,' Exod. xiv. 13. Such was that salvation, as they had no cause to fear those their enemies any more. The like may be exemplified in

<sup>1</sup> Hoc est robur virtutis et fidei, credere et scire quod Deus à morte præsentæ liberare potest.—*Cyp. Epist.*, lib. iv. ep. 6.

other deliverances which God undertook to give, especially in the cures which Christ did in the days of his flesh. When his pleasure was to heal any, he made them whole, Mat. xv. 28; and for evidence thereof, he commanded lepers to shew themselves to the priests, whose office it was to judge whether a leprosy were perfectly cured or no, Luke xvii. 14. Others, Mat. ix. 6; John v. 8, that had been very weak and impotent, he willed to carry their beds, that thereby it might be seen that they were perfectly cured. The dead he caused to rise up, Mark v. 41; Luke vii. 14; John xi. 43. Demoniaes he charged to preach the gospel, Mark v. 19, 20. But the greatest and best evidence that can be given hereof is the eternal salvation which is given to saints, wherunto the apostle having relation, saith, 'He is able to save to the uttermost,' Heb. vii. 25.<sup>1</sup>

God will have his works to be manifested to be divine: to be so perfect in their kind as nothing need be added thereto, nor help sought of any other but of him; that so by evident demonstrations men may be forced to say, 'This is the finger of God.'

1. Assuredly they that know and believe this truth, that the Lord saveth them whom he undertaketh to help, cannot but be much encouraged in their distresses to seek help of him. In such cases as are to men incurable, we use to do much for some present ease: and yet fail oftentimes in that which we seek for, and expect at mens' hands, as that 'woman which had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.' If we could believe as she did, assuredly we should do as she did, and have as good success as she had.

2. Let us beware of Asa's fault, who 'in his disease sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians,' 2 Chron. xvi. 12. How much better had it been to have sought not to the physicians, but to the Lord.<sup>2</sup> Which I would not have so taken as if physicians were not at all in any case to be sought unto; but to shew that it is much better to neglect all means

<sup>1</sup> *eis tō panteleis*, id est perfectè. Ita videlicet ut nihil ad eam salutem possit amplius desiderari.—*Beda in annot. major. in hunc loc.*

<sup>2</sup> Vae his qui tempore tribulationis atque angustie non confidunt in Domino, sed in Ægyptiorum, id est secularium hominum, auxilio.—*Jerome Comment. lib. x. in Isa. xxxi.*

than to neglect the Lord, who giveth a blessing to all the means that are at any time of any use. Warrantable means may lawfully, must conscientiously be used, but used as the hand of God's providence, whereby he doth whatsoever good thing is done by them. Woe is denounced against them that trust to means without the Lord, Isa. xxx. 1, &c., and xxxi. 1, &c. Whether, therefore, means be used, or not used, let not the Lord be neglected. He saveth.

Sec. 41. *Of God's taking occasion to help at a pinch.*

III. *Man's extremity is God's opportunity.*<sup>1</sup> Then, even then especially, is God ready to help, when men are at the lowest. To pass over those instances which are mentioned before,<sup>2</sup> there are two proverbs used in Scripture which give good proof to this point. The one is this: 'In the mount will the Lord be seen,' Gen. xxii. 14. *בהר יהוה יראוה*.<sup>3</sup> Knowledge of the just occasion of this proverb will give light to the true interpretation thereof. The occasion, therefore, was this: God gave an express charge to Abraham to take his only, his beloved son, even him of whom it was said, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called,' and to offer him for a burnt-offering on a mountain which the Lord should shew him. Abraham, in obedience to the Lord's charge, went on whither the Lord appointed him, with a full resolution to do what he was commanded to do. Three days was he in journeying to the place; and at length came to the top of a mount, where he built an altar, laid the wood in order, bound Isaac, laid him thereon, took a knife, and stretched out his hand to slay his son. Thus in his intent he had slain and sacrificed his son.<sup>4</sup> In all this time did not God shew any mind or means to save Isaac; but even then, when there was scarce a step betwixt him and death, the Lord shewed himself, and declared his pleasure for preserving Isaac. Now because it was on a mount where Isaac was thus near unto death, and that on the mount, and not before, God shewed himself for the preservation

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Hoc apud Hebræos exivit in proverbium, ut si quando in angustia constituti sunt, et Domini optant auxilio sublevari, dicant, In monte Dominus videbit.—*Jerome Quest. in Gen.*

<sup>4</sup> Quantum ad voluntatem attinet, cruentaverat dextram Patriarcha, &c.—*Chrys. in Gen. xxii, Hom. 47.*

of Isaac, thence arose this proverb: 'In the mount will the Lord be seen.' And to be an evidence to all future ages of God's wisdom in affording his help at the last east, the Holy Ghost prefixeth this clause: 'As it is said to this day.'

The other proverb is this: 'The children are come to the birth, and there is no strength to bring forth,' 2 Kings xix. 3. By this proverb, Jerusalem, being so besieged by the king of Assyria, as there was, in regard of human helps, little hope of deliverance, is compared to a woman great with child, in pain of travail. The inhabitants of the city are resembled to the children in the mother's womb; the extremity of distress wherein they were, to the difficulty and danger of travail. Such then was their case, as the case of a woman, which, having a weak child not able to help itself, is spent with pain and travail, and hath no midwife, nor any other means of help. Were they not now brought even to uttermost extremity? In this extremity, when they were so low brought, the 'Lord helped them,' 2 Kings xix. 35.

The help that in such extremities is afforded manifestly appeareth to be from God. When the Egyptians observed the succour which was afforded to the Israelites in the midst of the Red Sea, they said, 'The Lord fighteth for them,' Exod. xiv. 25. Thus is God the more honoured by reserving himself to such extremities.

In extremities succour is much more welcome, much better accepted, more highly prized, and man's heart more affected and inflamed therewith. When the Israelites were safely led through the depths, then they sang the Lord praises, Ps. cvi. 9, 12.

Is there not now great and just reason that God should take this opportunity to help?

1. Wait, therefore, to the very uttermost of an extremity. This being the most seasonable time for God to help, most meet it is that we should tarry the Lord's leisure, and wait for his season. This the prophet noteth to be a property of true faith, 'He that believeth maketh not haste,' Isa. xxviii. 16. He seeketh not to prevent the time appointed of the Lord. If the Lord tarry, the believer will wait, Hab. ii. 3. He well knoweth that there is an appointed time which cannot be prevented, which shall not be overslipped. For the Lord will take his opportunity.

2. When thou supposest that the uttermost of an extremity is come, then put fire to the powder of thy prayer; then stir up thy soul to all fervency; then be instant and importunate; then give the Lord no rest; then especially plead these and such like promises: 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' Heb. xiii. 5; 'He that shall come will come, and will not tarry,' Heb. x. 37; 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape,' 1 Cor. x. 13; 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee,' Isa. xliii. 2.

Be so far from fainting by reason of the extremity of distress, as rather with stronger confidence expect deliverance. This being God's opportunity, put him in mind of thine extremity, and thus plead it, 'Arise, O Lord, have mercy: for the time to have mercy, yea, the set time, is come,' Ps. cii. 13; 'O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake,' Dan. ix. 19. Only let the truth of confidence be manifested by repentance.<sup>1</sup> He that repenteth may be confident when the time to save is come.

Sec. 42. *Of applying to ourselves God's dealing with others.*

IV. *Due observation*<sup>2</sup> *of God's mercy to others awaketh men in like cases to acknowledge God's mercy to them.* This was it that moved the prophet to say, that when he was brought low, the Lord saved him, because he had duly observed how the Lord preserved the simple. Well note the forms of praise that are recorded in Scripture, and you shall find it usual with the saints to relate God's accustom'd dealing with others to be such as it was with them. To omit the many psalms of David that are pertinent to this purpose, the two hymns of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 1, &c., and the Virgin Mary, Luke i. 46, &c., give good proof hereof.

Men ordinarily behold God's dealing with others with a single eye, whereby they are so convinced of the verity and equity of that which they see, as they

<sup>1</sup> Confidat qui agit penitentiam, quum venit tempus salvandi.—*Jerome Comment. in Psalmi. ci.*

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 55.

cannot but acknowledge the like (when the like falleth out) in their own case.

Behold here what good we may gain to ourselves by taking notice of the divine properties as they are exercised on others. Few or none can so well discern the evidences of God's providence and mercy, or of his justice, jealousy, and displeasure, in themselves as in others. Objects brought too near to the eye cannot be distinctly and clearly discerned. Self-love dims men's sight in their own case. When others partake of any good thing we can soon say, O how good is God unto them. When judgments are executed on others we are ready to ascribe it to the justice of the Lord. Well, seeing we are so forward to discern God's dealing in other men's cases, let us make good use of this our disposition, and do so still, that hereby we may be brought to the mind of this holy man; and finding the Lord to deal with others as he doth with us, acknowledge as much; and that, as in works of judgment to be humbled the more, so in works of mercy to be provoked to more hearty thankfulness, as we shall be in truth, and on just ground we can say, 'The Lord that sheweth mercy to them that are in misery, was very merciful to me when I was in misery.'

Sec. 43. *Of the exposition and resolution of the seventh verse.*

Ver. 7. *Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*

Here beginneth the second part of this psalm,<sup>1</sup> which setteth out the prophet's protestation for his after purpose. This hath respect:

1. To his inward disposition.
2. To his outward conversation.

For his inward disposition he professeth a quiet settling of his soul.

Rest, מנוחה, whereby his inward disposition is here expressed, is opposed to travail and labour. Exod. xxiii. 12; Gen. viii. 9, or to trouble and sorrow, Ruth i. 9; Deut. xxviii. 65, and that both outward, Lam. v. 5, and inward, Isa. xxviii. 12.

Here it is taken in the latter respect, as opposed to inward trouble and anguish, as is evident by the relation it hath to his soul. It importeth an assur-

<sup>1</sup> See sec. 2.

ance of God's favour to him, and tranquillity of mind and peace of conscience thence arising.

This rest he calleth his soul's, because it was a rest wherein his soul had solaced herself before; which the Lord having given, he sweetly and quietly enjoyed as his own.

But it seemeth that his bitter affliction had bereaved him of it, and therefore as to a right lost and recovered again, he saith, 'Return,' שובני. For this is the very word which the angel useth to Hagar when she fled from her mistress, 'Return,' Gen. xvi. 9. As Hagar through her mistress' rough dealing with her fled from her, so the soul of this prophet by reason of affliction fell from her former quiet confidence in God. As the angel therefore biddeth Hagar 'return to her mistress,' so the understanding of this prophet biddeth his soul 'return to her rest.'

Very elegant and emphatical is this manner of the prophet's directing his speech to his soul as to another person, thus, 'O my soul.' Hereby his understanding well enlightened and resolved of God's favour to him, stirreth up his will, conscience, heart, and affections to be quieted, and no longer perplexed and troubled with doubts and fears about God's wrath, but to rest assured of his love and favour.

To shew what good ground there was for his soul to repose itself quietly in the Lord, he addeth, 'For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.' The first particle being a causal particle, *for*, כִּי, sheweth that this is added as a reason of that which went before. The reason is taken from the manifestation of God's favour to him, and it may thus be framed:

He with whom the Lord dealeth bountifully may well rest on the Lord.

But the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee, O my soul.

Therefore thou, O my soul, mayest well rest on the Lord.

One Hebrew word is expressed by this circumlocution, hath dealt bountifully (נָתַן, God's repaying). The word properly signifieth to repay; it hath in that signification, relation to something done before, and that good or evil; and in both these senses it is attributed to God and men. God is said to 'repay, or reward the righteous according to their

righteousness,' Ps. xviii. 20; and to the wicked to 'repay or render a recompense,' Jer. li. 6. In these respects he is called 'a God of recompenses,' Jer. li. 56. (אֱלֹהֵי נְכוּלִים.) Men, likewise, are said to 'repay or render for good,' Ps. cxvi. 12, and 'for evil,' Ps. cxxxvii. 8. But the word is also simply used without relation to anything before, especially being attributed to God, and that in the better sense, for conferring or bestowing some good. Thus doth the Psalmist pray to God to be 'recompensed,' Ps. cxix. 17, that is, graciously dealt with by him; and acknowledged that he hath so dealt with him, Ps. cxlii. 7. In this simple signification do Hebrew expositors,<sup>1</sup> Greek translators,<sup>2</sup> and other interpreters and expositors<sup>3</sup> take the word in this place. Thus some of our English translators turn the word here, 'hath been beneficial,' others, 'hath dealt graciously.' And because the kindness which God sheweth is not scanty or niggardly, but such as becometh his majesty to give, others thus translate it 'hath dealt bountifully.'

To infer any matter of merit on man's part, because a word that sometimes signifieth to repay is attributed to God in relation to man, is too sandy a foundation for such a lofty Babel.

To take occasion from hence to set out the bounty of the Lord would be too impertinent. The word doth indefinitely set down the grace, favour, mercy, or goodness of the Lord, without any particular or distinct respect to extraordinary liberality and bounty.

The principal point here to be noted is, the alteration of the prophet's disposition. Where before he was restless, now he returneth to rest.

In expressing hereof three points are observable :

1. The matter.
2. The manner.
3. The motive.

In the matter are further to be noted :

1. The action, return.
2. The object, rest.
3. The agent, soul.

The manner is by an apostrophe to his soul, O my soul.

The motive is taken from the manifestation of

<sup>1</sup> 'Targum,' נָכַל טוֹבָה retribuit bonum.

<sup>2</sup> LXX. ἐπέστρεψεν, benefecit.

<sup>3</sup> See Jerome, Aug. aliique.

God's favour to him; for, the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

A further exemplification hereof is in the next verse :

1. The action, return, implieth a former restlessness, and sheweth that,

The souls of saints are oft unsettled.

2. The object, rest, together with the appropriation thereof to his soul, thy, demonstrateth that, Saints have a rest.

3. The agent, soul, to which the forenamed action and object have relation, giveth evidence that,

The rest proper to saints is spiritual. Such a rest as their soul, a spiritual substance, may enter into.

4. The motive, taken from the manifestation of God's favour, whereof he had now some assurance, declareth that,

Sense of God's favour is the ground of saints' rest.

5. The manner of expressing all these by speaking to his soul, and provoking it to enter into rest, teacheth that,

Men must stir up themselves to that which they see to be good for them.

Sec. 44. *Of the unsettledness whereunto saints are subject.*

1. *The souls of saints are oft unsettled, much disturbed, and restless.*<sup>1</sup> What can we else judge of him who made this expostulation with his soul, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?' Ps. xlii. 11, and professed that his 'soul refused comfort,' Ps. lxxvii.

2. Or of him that said, 'When I lie down I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day,' Job vii. 4.

This thus falleth out by reason of the violence of temptations and troubles whereunto they are subject on the one side, and by reason of the weakness of their flesh and disability to resist those temptations on the other side.<sup>2</sup> So long as breath remains

<sup>1</sup> Mortem frequenter in hoc seculi istius lubrico sustinebat, inquietus fluctibus peccatorum.—*Amb. in Orat. de Obi. Theod.*

<sup>2</sup> Sancti cum mente sint spirituales, adhuc tamen isto corruptibili corpore quod aggravat animam recte intelliguntur esse carnales, &c.—*Aug. cont. Jul. Pelag.* lib. vi. c. 11.

in us flesh remains in us: and 'the flesh is weak when the spirit is ready,' Mat. xxvi. 41. Yea, when the spirit is willing patiently to yield and quietly to submit itself to God, the flesh swelleth, rebelleth, and raiseth tumults. So as saints being in their mind spiritual, are notwithstanding carnal in their corrupt flesh, which is a burden to their soul. An apostle in this case saith of himself, 'When I would do good, evil is present with me. And I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind,' &c., Rom. vii. 21, 23. Now calamities and afflictions being grievous, Heb. xii. 11, namely, to the flesh, they make it to stir and struggle, to murmur and mutiny; yea, the violent heat of them causeth a mist to arise before the light of understanding, and to obscure and darken it exceedingly, so as that light which should in this tempest direct a man cannot clearly shew itself. It falleth out with a man in this case as with a glass of sweet and clear water that hath much dregs in the bottom. Stir the glass much and the water will be much troubled, nor sweetness will be so smelt as before, nor clearness seen till it may be settled again. Herein lieth a main difference betwixt Christ's pure and man's polluted nature. He, indeed, took to himself our true nature, even the nature of our infirmities, and the infirmities of our nature, but free from sin; no dregs of corruption were in his nature. Though he therefore seemed to be shaken all to pieces, yet no rebellious, no disordered passion was thereby stirred up in him. These phrases, 'Now is my soul troubled,' John xii. 27; 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' Mat. xxvi. 38; 'If it be possible let this cup pass from me,' chap. xxvi. 39; 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' chap. xxvii. 46, manifested a very dolorous agony in his soul, but no seditious mutiny. Such passion in our soul would stir up much sedition, yea, after we are truly regenerate. For we are but in part regenerate.

1. This infirmity of our nature is not wisely observed of them, who, from the perplexities and agonies of saints especially, if thereby they be forced to manifest any disquietness of soul, take occasion to insult over them, and to trample the more upon them. David was much troubled with such, and

oft complaineth of them. In that respect he saith of them, 'They talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded,' Ps. lxxix. 26. Thus Job's friends, though they came a long journey to comfort him, yet proved 'miserable comforters,' Job xvi. 2. Too many such miserable comforters there are, who, when a man hath need of some comfortable cordials, give him (as Christ's, Mat. xxvii. 34, 48, and David's, Ps. lxxix. 21, enemies did) gall for meat, and vinegar to drink. The heathen accounted this a most inhuman part.<sup>1</sup> How ill then doth it besem them who profess themselves to be Christians.

2. Let such as through God's mercy have peace and comfort in their souls and consciences so bear with those that are unsettled and perplexed, as they may the better, by speaking 'a word in season,' Isa. i. 4, quiet and settle their souls. It is an express charge given to such as are 'strong to bear with the infirmities of the weak,' Rom. xv. 1, and to such as are 'spiritual to restore a brother overtaken, with the spirit of meekness,' Gal. vi. 1, and that for this reason, 'lest they also be tempted.' What any one is subject unto, every one is subject unto. Thus shall we shew ourselves to be as a true brother, even 'born for adversity,' Prov. xvii. 17.

3. From this whereunto saints are subject to be sometimes unsettled, all have need to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, and to be well instructed how to have 'the heart established with grace,' Heb. xiii. 9, that therewith the soul may be fast fixed, as the oak is said to be, whose roots spread as far and grow as deep into the earth as the boughs thereof grow wide and high into the air,<sup>2</sup> whence it cometh to pass that no storm can overturn an oak—it will sooner be rent and split clean through than overthrow. So they who are 'well-rooted and built up in Christ and established in the faith,' Col. ii. 7, and 'rooted and grounded in love,' Eph. iii. 17, will sooner have their bodies and souls rent asunder than be overturned in their faith on Christ. Instance the true martyrs of the church.

To enforce this point further, note the next note.

<sup>1</sup> Ungere jacentem est inhumanum.—*Cic. pro C. Rab. Post.*

<sup>2</sup> Quantum vertice ad auras Ætheris, tantum radice in Tartara tendit, &c.—*Virg. Georg. l. 2.*

Sec. 45. *Of the rest of saints.*

II. *Saints have a rest.* Yea, even in this world they have a rest. How else could the prophet here say to his soul, 'Enter into thy rest?' Why else should he blame his soul for being restless, Ps. xlii. 11, xliii. 5. That peace which as proper to the saints is expressly mentioned in Scripture proveth as much, John xvi. 33; Rom. v. 1, xiv. 17.

To embolden, encourage, and hearten them in the sea of this world, that by the storms of affliction they should not be overwhelmed and drowned before they come to the 'rest which remaineth for them,' Heb. iv. 9, and which the Lord Jesus shall give them 'when he shall be revealed from heaven,' 2 Thes. i. 7, here they have a rest, wherein, that we be not deceived, mark the third point.

Sec. 46. *Of the spiritual rest of saints.*

III. *The rest proper to saints is spiritual.*<sup>1</sup> It is such a rest as may stand with tribulation in this world. It is 'a peace which they have in Christ,' John xvi. 33, 'a peace with God,' Rom. v. 1, 'a peace of God that passeth all understanding,' that keepeth men's 'hearts and minds,' Phil. iv. 7, 'a peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,' opposed to 'meat and drink,' Rom. xiv. 17, a peace of conscience; for a good and quiet conscience is the bed of the soul, in which it sweetly and quietly resteth.<sup>2</sup>

This is the best, truest, and surest rest; a rest that sustaineth a man's infirmity; a rest that not only quieteth the soul when the body is disquieted, but also moderateth and mitigateth the disquietness of the body.<sup>3</sup> This maketh us 'glory in tribulations,' Rom. v. 3. What made 'Peter to sleep quietly between soldiers bound with chains?' Acts xii. 6. What made 'Paul and Silas,' having been sorely scourged, cast into prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, at midnight to sing? chap. xvi. 23-25; surely this spiritual rest wherein their souls were reposed; this peace of God. This being the best rest, God provideth it for his best beloved.

1. Take evidence hereby of the true estate of

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Bona et tranquilla conscientia est lectus animæ. In hoc requiem capit anima.—Bern. Serm. parv. 1.*

<sup>3</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii. part 5. sec. 724.

saints, and be instructed in the manner of God's dealing with them. True it is that he putteth them to many trials; 'The Lord scourgeth every son that he receiveth. All are partakers of chastisement,' Heb. xii. 6, 8. 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,' 2 Tim. iii. 12. Yet, as true it is that the Lord affordeth sufficient supportance, yea, and comfort also in all their troubles, that we may learn that God's captived servants are not forsaken of him.<sup>1</sup> 'God is faithful who will not suffer his to be tempted above that they are able to bear,' 1 Cor. x. 13. As Christ said of the Sabbath, I may say of the afflictions of saints, 'afflictions are for the saints and not the saints for afflictions,' Mark ii. 27; therefore, God correcteth us for our profit, and from thence issueth 'the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby,' Heb. xii. 10, 11. The assistance, comfort, peace, and joy which God giveth even in troubles and afflictions, ministereth just cause for us all to say, 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed,' 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. This is the benefit of spiritual rest, that temporal troubles do not disturb the same. If any be disquieted and unsettled, as we heard before some might be, it is their own weakness. They have a rest to return unto, ordained, revealed by God, whereunto, when they recal their spirit, they will return; as here the prophet doth. If thus there be peace and rest to saints in times of trials and troubles, inward peace, spiritual rest in outward trials and temporal troubles, who can doubt of their rest in halcyon, in quiet and peaceable times, when there is nothing to disturb the same? The world is altogether ignorant of this peace. If they had a true and due understanding thereof, their mouths would not be so opened as they are against saints by reason of their troubles.

2. Take notice hereby of the difference betwixt the condition of believers and unbelievers, servants of the Lord and slaves of the devil. They have their rest—a rest that may stand with external unquietness. Though in body and in outward estate they may seem to have no rest; though in that re-

<sup>1</sup> *Discamus captivos Dei servos non deserere a Domino suo.—Aug. Epist. 122, ad Victorian.*

spect they may be thought, as Christ, to be in a worse case than foxes, that 'have holes, and birds of the air that have nests,' Mat. viii. 20, because they have not where to rest their head; yet have they a rest for their soul, a rest that refresheth and solaceth both soul and body. But it is otherwise with the wicked. '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,' Isa. lvii. 20, 21. Though they have health of body, and all outward prosperity; though by reason thereof they say (as the rich fool did, Luke xii. 19) to their soul, 'Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;' yet cannot this be but only to the teeth outward. They seem to have rest, and to enjoy quiet; but that is no rest where the soul is restless,<sup>1</sup> that is no peace of mind where the mind is troubled with stings of a guilty conscience. Their conscience is like to the fore-mentioned troubled sea. If they feel it not, it is because they are intoxicated and made senseless, as the drunkard that 'lieth down in the midst of the sea or upon the top of a mast,' and feeleth nothing. Prov. xxiii. 34, 35. Their 'conscience is seared with an hot iron,' 1 Tim. iv. 2. When it is roused it will be as 'a roaring lion and a ranging bear, or a bear robbed of her whelps,' Prov. xxviii. 15, and chap. xvii. 12.

3. Envy not (O ye saints) the rest wherof the men of this world so much boast; return to your own rest; rest satisfied therewith. In your greatest troubles meditate thereon, solace yourselves therein. The mariner, in hope of coming to a calm haven, patiently endureth all manner of storms while he is on sea. Should not saints much more quietly bear all manner of troubles, not only in expectation of that 'rest which remaineth to the people of God,' Heb. iv. 9, but also in regard of that inward spiritual rest which they have in the midst of their greatest afflictions?

Sec. 47. *Of God's favour, the rest of saints.*

IV. *Source of God's favour is the ground of saints' rest.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Videtur habere tranquillitatem, videntur quiete frui; sed non est quies ubi animus inquietus est; non est tranquillitas mentis ubi animus exagitatur obnoxio stimulo conscientie.—*Aub. Comment. in Ps. cxviii.*, Sermon. xvii. ver. 5.

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After the prophet had expostulated with his soul about her unquietness, he gave this advice, 'Hope in God,' Ps. xlii. 11, as the only means of settling his soul. Faith is it that persuadeth the soul of God's favour. Hence is it that 'being justified by faith we have peace with God,' Rom. v. 1. Yea, because this peace relieth on God's favour, it is called 'the peace of God,' Phil. iv. 7. When David was in one of the most desperate distresses that ever befell him, it is said that 'he encouraged himself in the Lord his God,' 1 Sam. xxx. 6. The assurance that he had of God's favour, and confidence that the Lord was his God, supported him and moved him to rest thereon. Many are the metaphors which to this end are applied to God, as 'Rock, fortress, deliverer, strength, buckler, horn of salvation, high tower,' Ps. xviii. 2; 'refuge,' Ps. xlvi. 1; 'portion of inheritance, maintainer of lot,' Ps. xvi. 5; 'hiding-place,' Ps. cxix. 114; 'strong habitation, whereunto we may continually resort,' Ps. lxxi. 3.

1. Nothing can satisfy the souls of saints but God's favour. They find all other things to be 'vanity and vexation of spirit,' Eccles. i. and ii. Whereas therefore others say, 'Who will shew us any good,' saints say, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us,' Ps. iv. 6.

2. God's favour is that proper place whither a soul well enlightened and rectified (as the souls of the saints are) aspireth. Now nothing resteth till it comes to its proper place. Instance light things that fly upward, and heavy things that fall downward.

3. The uttermost end wherunto the saints refer all their endeavours is to be accepted of God. All things which advisedly they do, are but as means for attaining to that end. Now till men attain to that main end at which they aim, they cannot think of a spiritual rest. A traveller hath no settled rest till he come to his journey's end: nor a mariner, nor a soldier, nor any other that professeth a weighty end to himself.

1. Let this only true rest be well observed; let us be well instructed therein, and that the rather because all of all sorts desire rest; but most, yea, and all that are not thoroughly instructed in this true rest, are deceived thereabout. He that is destitute of the needful things of this world, sup-



poseth that if he had bread to eat and raiment to put on, he should say to his soul, be at rest. He that is in pain conceives that if he had ease he should rest, and desire no more. So he that is sick, if he had recovery; he that is in prison, if he had liberty; he that is in any distress, if he had release. Yet when their desire is accomplished, they are as restless as before. After one thing is obtained, another is desired. Greater contentment is supposed to be in the things of this world by them that want them, than can be found to be by them that enjoy them. Hence is it that wealth to the covetous, honour to the ambitious, pleasure to the voluptuous man, and all things here below to such as desire them, are as water to him that hath a dropsy, the more is drunk the more is desired.<sup>1</sup> 'The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ears filled with hearing.' No human knowledge satisfieth the philosopher; no inventions, no indulgencies, the superstitious person. All things out of God are as ice, snow, dew, and other like meteors; they waste in using, they soon melt or dry away. In consideration hereof saith the prophet; Isa. lv. 2, 'Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?' 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?' Prov. xxiii. 5. As all natural men are unsatisfied in all their desires and endeavours, so among others, they who most set their thoughts and hearts on mischief. Fittingly doth the prophet, Isa. lvii. 20, resemble such to 'the troubled sea when it cannot rest.' Yea, in the greatest calm it beats against the shore, and raiseth waves which cast up mire and dirt.<sup>2</sup>

2. Seeing out of God there is no rest, let the Lord and his favour be to thee as the ark was to the dove. While she was out of the ark 'she found no rest for the sole of her foot,' Gen. viii. 9. Give no sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids till thou hast found out this rest for thy soul, assurance of God's favour. To be restless till we

find this rest, will be a means to find it. 'The Lord filleth the hungry with good things,' Luke i. 53. 'He giveth to him that is athirst of the fountain of life freely,' Rev. xxi. 6.

3. For gaining such assurance of God's favour as may make thee rest securely therein, observe these rules.<sup>1</sup>

(1.) Acquaint thyself with God's promises, which are the only true sure ground of faith and confidence. For God's promises are declarations of God's favour towards man; what God promiseth, man may safely rest upon. It was God's promise whereof David thus saith, 'Upon it thou hast caused me to hope,' Ps. exix. 49.

(2.) Meditate seriously and frequently on God's properties, as on his grace, mercy, truth, power, &c.<sup>2</sup> This meditation, added to faith in God's promises, will be as oil put into a lamp, which will continue the life and light of it. The forementioned description of God, ver. 5. sec. 26, by his divine properties, sheweth that the faith of this prophet in God's favour was nourished thereby.

(3.) Observe God's former dealing with thee, and call to mind such evidences of his favour as he hath shewed to thee in former times. This will give thee evidence of his present good-will towards thee; for whom he once loveth he ever loveth: he loveth his with an everlasting love, John xiii. 1; Jer. xxxi. 3. When Zion said, 'The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me,' this answer was replied, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child? &c. Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee,' &c., saith the Lord, Isa. xlix. 14, &c.

(4.) When thy affections are much prone to heaviness, and thy heart much misgiveth thee (as we speak) by reason of doubts and fears, let thy judgment, grounded on God's word and promises, support thee. A right understanding of God's promises are of force to keep a heavy spirit from sinking. A man's judgment well-informed, will convince his affections of folly when they make doubt of God's favour, and so bring them to yield to that which it conceiveth to be truth.

Having some evidences of God's favour towards

<sup>1</sup> Quo plus sunt potæ, plus sitiuntur aquæ.—*Orat. fast.* lib. i. *Eccles.* i. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Impios comparat mari quod nunquam potest quiescere: sed etiam in summa tranquillitate, fractis ad littora advolvitur fluctibus: finisque eius lutum est, et conculcatio.—*Jerome, Comment.*, lib. xvi., in Isa. lvii.

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii., part 6, sec. 71, 72.

<sup>2</sup> See *Ibid.*, sec. 25, &c.

these, repose thyself therein. Say to God as the psalmist doth, 'Thou art my hiding-place,' Ps. cxix. 114. אתה סתרי. The beasts of the wilderness, that have their dens and hiding-places, use on all occasions to have recourse thereunto. In their dens they sleep securely; to their dens they carry their prey, and there eat it: when they are wounded, or any way hurt, they make to their dens; there they lick themselves whole, if at least they can; but if their hurt be mortal, so as they must needs die, they will die in their dens. Thus ought we to make the Lord our den, our hiding-place, and in all conditions, on all occasions, to repose ourselves in him and his favour. If we have cause of joy, to rejoice in the Lord; if of sorrow, to mourn and shed our tears in his bosom: while we live, to live in him; when we die, to die in him, even within the arms of his favour. Thus shalt thou be sure to be safe in all estates; for safe is he whom the Lord doth keep. Oh cleave to him, therefore, who hath made you! Stand with him, and ye shall stand safe. Rest in him, and ye shall be in quiet rest.<sup>1</sup>

Sec. 48. *Of comforting and quickening one's self.*

V. *Men must stir up themselves to that which they see to be good for them.*<sup>2</sup> As the prophet doth here stir up his soul to return unto her rest, so in other places to 'hope in God,' Ps. xlii. 5; 'to wait upon God,' Ps. lxxii. 5; 'to remember all his benefits,' Ps. ciii. 2; yea, and 'to praise the Lord,' Ps. cxlvi. 1. To the proof of this point tend all such exhortations as in Scripture are made in the first person, as such as these, 'Let us labour to enter into that rest,' Heb. iv. 11; 'Let us go boldly to the throne of grace,' ver. 16; 'Let us go on to perfection,' chap. vi. 1; 'Let us draw near with a true heart,' &c., chap. x. 22. By these, men of God stirred up themselves as well as others.

For even they who are in place, and have any calling to stir up others, 'are men of like passions with others,' Acts xiv. 15, and are not only subject, but prone also to wax dull, cold, backward to holy duties, even to such as tend to their spiritual comfort. We have shewed that the best may be

much disquieted and restless,<sup>3</sup> and therefore have need to 'stir up the gift of God that is in them,' 2 Tim. i. 6.

*Quest.* How can this be?

*Ans.* I. By putting difference betwixt the understanding and affections. The understanding is in man as a mistress, the affections are as handmaidens. The mistress may see that to be very meet to be done which the handmaidens are loath to do, and thereupon quicken them.

2. By distinguishing betwixt the spirit and flesh. The spirit is oft willing when the flesh is weak, Mat. xxvi. 41. Yea, when the inward man warreth against it, Rom. vii. 22, 23. Now all these being in man, when the spirit driveth away the heaviness of the flesh, man is said to stir up himself.

Learn here how beneficial a man may be to himself, how he may instruct, direct, encourage, and comfort himself, namely, by well using that light of understanding which God giveth him, and by applying that wherein he is well informed to himself. On this ground, when we are tempted to a sin, when we find passion, pride, lust, or any other corruption beginning to arise in us, let us make our case to be another's case, and by our understanding reason with our souls as if they were other person's, and what we would in such cases say to others, let us say to our own souls, as the psalmist, 'Why art thou disquieted, O my soul?' Ps. xlii. 5. And here, 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul.'<sup>2</sup> Many that much doubt, and even despair themselves, can produce sound grounds to move others to be confident in God, which, if they would press upon their own souls, they might be much quickened thereby. They can tell others that, when God seems to hide himself, it is but a cloud that keepeth away the brightness of God's favour, which shall be driven away, and therefore they ought to hope and wait. They can tell others that temptations to sin must be resisted, and that by resisting of them they will be vanquished. They can set a catalogue of pro-

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Spera in Domino, respondet conturbanti se anime sue, et quasi rationem reddenti perturbationis sue propter mala quibus abundet hic mundus.—*Aug. Enar. in P.* 41.

<sup>1</sup> Inhaerete illi qui fecit vos; state cum eo, et stabitis; requiescite in eo, et quieti eritis.—*Aug. Confess.* l. 4, c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 43.

mises before others in their conflicts, and be plentiful and powerful in persuading others to bountiful duties, and dissuading them from disgraceful views. If thus they would deal with themselves, what good might they do to themselves! Thus should they never want (no, not when they are most retired, most private, even by themselves alone) an instructor, a director, a counsellor, a comforter. And no counsellor, no comforter, can be more powerful with a man's soul than himself.

Sec. 49. *Of the exposition and resolution of the eighth verse.*

Ver. 8. *For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.*

The forementioned kindness of God is here particularly exemplified by the deliverance which God gave him from his distress.

How his soul may be said to be delivered hath been before shewed on ver. 4, sec. 24.

Death is here put for such a desperate distress as threatened death.<sup>1</sup> In the case wherein he was, (to use the apostle's phrase,) 'he despaired even of life: he had the sentence of death in himself, and thus God who raiseth the dead delivered him from a great death,' 2 Cor. i. 8, 9. The words, therefore, are not literally to be taken of a miraculous raising from death, but his distress is thus by this word, *death*,<sup>2</sup> set out to aggravate his danger, and to amplify God's deliverance. Hereof see more on ver. 3, sec. 15.

The tears of his eyes are here mentioned to shew how he was affected with that affliction. Tears are outward effects and signs of inward anguish. When Jerusalem was carried captive into a strange land, 'She wept sore in the night, her tears were on her cheeks,' Lam. i. 2. Yea, Christ (who with the nature of our infirmities assumed the infirmities of our nature, 'yet without sin,' Heb. iv. 15) had in his bitter agony tears forced from his eyes.

God's delivering of this prophet's 'eyes from tears' implieth a removal of that distress whereof these tears were a sign, with which his soul was so troubled as his eyes gushed out with tears, so as the effect or sign is here put for the cause.<sup>3</sup>

Falling of his feet doth yet further aggravate the distress. The word translated falling, (דָּרַחַ) signifieth such a violent forcing of one as he cannot stand, as where it is said, 'In forcing thou hast forced me to fall,' Ps. cxviii. 13. (דָּרַחַ רַחֲמֵיךָ.) Now feet are the supporters of a body, when they fall, down falls all the body. Hereby is declared that the violence of his affliction was such, as like a boisterous storm, it was enough in his best strength to overthrow him, and it also so wasted his strength and weakened him as he could not stand, but was ready again and again to fall; it foiled him exceedingly. By removing that affliction God delivered his feet from falling. But this is spoken in an allegory. For, by his feet are meant his spirit; by falling, the fainting thereof. So as his very soul was preserved from being overwhelmed.

Some distinguish the three particulars thus: 'He hath delivered my soul from death,' by giving me a good conscience; 'mine eyes from tears,' by giving a quiet and a good conscience; 'my feet from sliding,' by giving a secure conscience.<sup>1</sup>

This is the exemplification of the motive mentioned in the latter clause of the former verse.

Herein note—

1. The manner of expressing it.
2. The matter whereof it consisteth.

The manner is by<sup>2</sup> a direct turning of his speech to God, thus: 'Thou hast,' &c.

The matter consisteth in a particular enumeration of the deliverances which God gave him. So as here is expressed:

1. The author of his deliverances. Thou.
2. The kinds thereof. And these are three:
1. His soul from death.
2. His eyes from tears.
3. His feet from falling.

For the manner. In the former verse he spake of the Lord in the third person, thus: 'The Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee;' but here to the Lord in the second person, 'thou hast delivered,' which implieth a familiarity. The apprehension of

<sup>1</sup> Eripuit animam meam de morte, oculos meos à lachrymis, pedes meos à lapsu. De morte, dando bonam conscientiam, a lachrymis, dando tranquillam et bonam à lapsu, dando securam.—Bern. *Scrm.* part i.

<sup>2</sup> Ἀποστροφή.

<sup>1</sup> Metonymia effecti.

<sup>2</sup> In abstracto.

<sup>3</sup> Metonymia effecti vel adjuncti.

God's bounty had quickened his spirit, and made him in a reverent manner the more bold; so as,

1. By a due consideration of God's favour to us we are made more familiar with God.

This prophet's thus speaking to God, 'Thou hast delivered,' sheweth that,

2. Deliverances are to be ascribed to God.

The first kind of deliverance, 'my soul from death,' giveth evidence that,

3. God can deliver from the power of death.

The second kind of deliverance, 'mine eyes from tears,' implieth two points, one intended, the other expressed.

4. Saints may be much affected with afflictions.

5. God can remove all matter of mourning.

The third kind of deliverance, 'my feet from falling,' importeth also two points, viz.,

6. Great distresses may foil saints.

7. God establisheth such as are ready to fall.

The fit applying of deliverances to the distinct distresses, as soul or life from death; eyes from tears; feet from falling, demonstrateth that,

8. God's remedy is answerable to man's necessity.

Sec. 50. *Of the means to become familiar with God.*

I. *By a due consideration of God's favour to us we are made more familiar with God.*<sup>1</sup> Thus Moses having duly observed how God knew him by name, that is, took especial notice of him, is emboldened to desire further to know God, and to see his glory, Exod. xxxiii. 12, 13, 18. And David, well weighing that gracious message which by Nathan God sent to him, concerning the establishing of his throne, maketh this inference: 'Therefore hath thy servant found in his heart,' that is, been bold, 'to pray this prayer unto thee,' 2 Sam. vii. 27. So Isaiah, chap. vi. 2; so Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 3; so Daniel, chap. vii. 19; x. 19; so many others.

Manifestation of God's favour worketh faith; the more that the evidences thereof are pondered, the more strength gathereth faith. Meditation on God's good-will to us, is to faith as a seasonable supply of oil to a lamp, which continueth to preserve the light thereof. Now 'by faith we have boldness and access with confidence,' Eph. iii. 12; and the stronger faith the more boldness.

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 49.

O let not any evidence of God's kindness pass by without due notice taken thereof. Do in this case with God as the servants of the king of Syria did with the king of Israel, diligently observe whether anything came from him, 1 Kings x. 33, that may demonstrate his good will to thee. Thus mayest thou gain assurance that thou art in the number of God's friends, 2 Chron. xx. 7; Isa. xii. 8; Cant. v. 1. This was it which made Abraham to be accounted the friend of God, because he believed, James ii. 23. God's kindness to men sheweth that they are his favourites. As wise favourites therefore are in a reverent manner familiar with their sovereign, so may such as know the Lord's mind be with him, and have free entrance into his presence, and assurance of gracious acceptance. A great privilege.

Sec. 51. *Of ascribing deliverances to God.*

II. *Deliverances are to be ascribed to God.*<sup>1</sup> This hath constantly been observed by such as have been guided by the Spirit of God, as by, Gen. xiv. 20, Melchizedech; chap. xxxii. 10, Jacob; Exod. xv. 1, 20, Moses, Miriam; Judges v. 1, Deborah, Barak; 1 Sam. xii. 11, Samuel; 2 Sam. xxii. 1, David; 2 Chron. xv. 11, Asa; 2 Chron. xx. 26, Jehoshaphat; Isa. xxxviii. 9, Hezekiah; Esther ix. 19, the Jews in captivity; Acts iv. 24, the apostles; and many others in all ages; yea, and Rev. xv. 3, the blessed spirits in heaven also.

All deliverances are wrought by God. Whatsoever the instrumental means be, he is the principal efficient and author. As he is the creator of all things, so the governor, the disposer, and orderer of all. And all creatures in the world are his servants, his instruments, used by him according to his will. If, therefore, by any right victory be ascribed, not to the munition, but to the general; recovery of health, not to the potion, but to the physician; good workmanship, not to the materials or tools, but to the artificer; by much more right, victory, recovery, all deliverances, all blessings are to be ascribed to God, who enableth generals, physicians, and all others to do what they do, and giveth all efficacy to the means that are in any way effectual. It is therefore most just and equal that that which is

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 49.

done by God be ascribed to him. His right it is, and shall he not have his right? Will subjects deal so unjustly with their king, soldiers with their general, servants with their master?

Fie on them therefore that either take no notice at all of such deliverances as they have, or else impute them to any other than to God; whether it be to themselves, to other men, to any secondary causes, to fortune, or to anything else. Three sorts of men do especially offend herein: idolaters, Dan. v. 22, 23, that ascribeth God's due to idols; flatterers, Acts xxiv. 2, that attribute it to men; ambitious persons, Isa. x. 8, &c.; Acts xii. 23, that take it to themselves. Two great evils are thus committed. The Creator is robbed of his due. To creatures is given more than their due. He, the only true God, is esteemed as no God. They that are not gods are accounted as gods. 'O my soul, come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united,' Gen. xlix. 6.

Be rather of the communion of saints, whose understanding being rightly informed in the extent of the divine providence, whereby every good thing that is wrought, is wrought, they are so in their hearts affected therewith as they cannot conceal the same, but make their tongues their glory in acknowledging and making known what God hath done to their souls. This, though it be most due to God, yet he accepts it as a kindness, as an honour done to him. And in testimony of his gracious acceptance of this grateful remembrance, he will afterward on other occasions be ready to deliver. For he never repenteth any goodness shewed to such as duly acknowledge the same. If we thankfully commemorate his blessings we shall excite him to confer greater blessings upon us.<sup>1</sup> Behold, then, a ready way to give glory to God, and to gain good to ourselves.

Sec. 52. *Of God's delivering from death.*

III. *God can deliver from the power of death.*<sup>2</sup> He can deliver;—

1. In such cases as threaten death; wherein men have cause to fear death; as the Israelites had when Pharaoh with a mighty host pursued them, and

they had no way to fly but through the sea, Exod. xiv. 2, &c., and again when they were besieged by the Syrians, 2 Kings vi. 24, &c.

2. When death hath begun to lay hold and to seize upon them, as a lion and a bear did upon the lambs which David kept, 1 Sam. xvii. 34. Thus it seemeth that death had seized on Paul, 2 Cor. i. 8, and on Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx. 1, who notwithstanding were both delivered.

3. When there is no possibility of avoiding death by any ordinary means. Thus was Jonah delivered out of the sea, Jonah i. 17; and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego out of the hot fiery furnace, Dan. iii. 26. God hath promised to be with his in fire and water, Isa. xliii. 2, in most desperate distresses.

4. When they are in the very power of death, and death actually seized upon them, and deprived them of life. Hereof we have many instances both in the old, 1 Kings xvii. 22; 2 Kings iv. 35, and xiii. 21; and the New Testament, Mat. ix. 25; Luke vii. 15; John xi. 44; Acts ix. 40, and xx. 10; Mat. xxvii. 52; Rom. i. 4. The vision of dry bones that came together, were knit with sinews, covered with flesh and skin, and had breath of life breathed into them, and lived, was a visible demonstration hereof, Ezek. xxxvii. 2, &c. But that evidence which far surpasseth all, is the general resurrection of all at the last day, John v. 28.

Supreme and absolute is the power and sovereignty of God over all, even grave and death, Rev. xx. 13, and 'him that hath the power of death, the devil,' Heb. ii. 14. They are all his vassals to hold or to let go whom he will.

1. Admirable is the comfort which hence ariseth to such as, being well instructed in the power of God, can in assurance of faith rest on him, as David did, who, when he, 1 Sam. xxx. 6, knew not whither on earth to flee for succour, encouraged himself in the Lord his God. For, nothing can befall us without the limits of his power; no danger can happen, out of which he is not able to deliver us.

*Quest.* May saints in confidence expect any deliverance that God is able to give?

*Ans.* Not simply; but with a willing subjection of themselves to his will, as they who said, 'Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the

<sup>1</sup> Si Dei beneficia commemoramus, ad majorem illum benevolentiam excitabimus. *Chrys. Hom.* ii., in 2 Cor. i.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 49.

burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us from thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known to thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods,' Dan. iii. 17. Herein then lieth the comfort which ariseth from God's power, that our God who is able to deliver us, will deliver us, if in his wisdom he see deliverance fit for us. For thus we may safely conclude;

What God seeth to be good for us, he will do.

What God will do, he can do.

What God can and will do, shall be done.

Therefore, what God seeth to be good for us, shall be done.

Just cause is here given unto us of looking to God, when death presents itself before our eyes; and to say unto him, 'We know not what to do; but our eyes are upon thee,' 2 Chron. xx. 12. Cast not therefore thine eyes too much downward. Fixing eyes aright on God worketh faith.

#### Sec. 53. *Of passion in saints.*

IV. *Saints may be much affected with afflictions.*<sup>1</sup>

They may weep, Ps. vi. 6, as this prophet did; and 'cry, yea, with a loud and bitter cry,' Esther iv. 1, and 'roar all the day long,' Ps. xxxii. 3, and wail and howl,' Micah i. 8, and express other symptoms and signs of much anguish and great grief.

'Is their strength the strength of stones? Or is their flesh of brass?' Job vi. 12. Flesh and blood remaining in the best while they remain in this world, maketh them sensible of smart, of pain, of loss, of disgrace, of other crosses which lie heavy upon them, and press and pinch them sore.

1. Away with the senseless and blockish opinion of stoics, who say that no passion besems a wise man. The heathen philosophers by that light of nature which they had, have sufficiently refuted that paradox.<sup>2</sup> To us that have the light of God's word, which commandeth expression of passion when there is just occasion, Joel i. 13, and hath commended it in such as have rightly done it, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27, yea, and hath expressly recorded the passion of him that is the Wisdom of God, Mark iii. 5, and taxed the contrary in obdurate persons,

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Cic. Tuscul. quest. lib. iv.—Lege Lactant. de vero cultu, lib. v. cap. 14, and Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. xvi. cap. 8, 9, and lib. ix. cap. 4, and Quest. in Gen. lib. i. 30, contra Stoicorum ἀπαθῆαι.

Isa. xxii. 12, 13, it cannot but seem a more than heathenish and brutish conceit.

2. Be not too censorious of other's passionate manifestation of their grief: especially when there is just cause, and a Christian mean is not exceeded. All that Satan could do against Job did not so deeply pierce to his soul as his friends' unfriendly censure of him.

3. Have compassion of such as (having cause) are in passion. 'Weep with them that weep,' Rom. xii. 15. Let us shew ourselves to be fellow-members of one and the same body, by a Christian sympathy, and fellow-feeling of one another's sorrows, 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27.

4. As for such as take occasion from the signs and effects of others' sorrows, to insult over them, let them well weigh the fearful imprecations made against them, Ps. lxxix. 10, 21, 22, &c.; and withal know that prophetic imprecations are divine denunciations of judgment. It much provokes the righteous Lord to give them just matter of sorrow, who laugh at others' sorrows.

#### Sec. 54. *Of God's turning sorrow into solace.*

V. *God can remove all matter of mourning.*<sup>1</sup> He here delivered this prophet's eyes from tears: he took away all occasion of weeping: in which sense he is said to 'Wipe away all tears from men's eyes,' Isa. xxv. 8; Rev. vii. 17; and to bid them 'Refrain their voice from weeping, and eyes from tears,' Jer. xxxi. 16; Luke vii. 13. Pertinent to this purpose are these proverbs, 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy,' Ps. cxxvi. 5. 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,' Ps. xxx. 5. Answerable herunto have been saints' prayers, God's promises and performances. For instance of prayers take these, 'Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice,' Ps. li. 8. 'Make us glad according to the years wherein thou hast afflicted us,' Ps. xc. 15. Of promises these, 'I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice for their sorrow,' Jer. xxxi. 13. 'Their fasts shall be joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts,' Zech. viii. 19. 'Thou shalt weep no more,' Isa. xxx. 19. Of

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 49. Eripuit oculos eius a lachrymis. Fugit enim doler, et tristitia et gemilus.—*Amb. in Orat. de Obiit. Theod.*

performances these, 'Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness,' Ps. xxx. 12. 'When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing,' Ps. cxxvii. 1, 2. Were not the eyes of that woman, which so wept as with her tears she washed the feet of Jesus, delivered from tears, when Christ said to her, 'Thy sins are forgiven?' Luke vii. 38, &c. When Hezekiah heard this doom, 'Thou shalt die and not live, he wept with great weeping,' Isa. xxxviii. 1, &c.<sup>1</sup>; but this second message from the Lord, 'I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years,' did questionless wipe away all his tears. Most pregnant for the point in hand is the end of the commission given to Christ, thus expressed, 'The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings, to comfort all that mourn, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness,' Isa. lxi. 1, &c.

That which God said to Hezekiah, 'I have seen thy tears,' Isa. xxxviii. 3, giveth the true and just reason of God's removing all matter of mourning. For the Lord being full of pity, 'The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort,' 2 Cor. i. 3. His bowels are moved at the sight of his children's tears, as it is noted of Christ, 'When he saw Mary weeping, and the Jews also weeping, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and wept,' John xi. 33, 35. And again, when he saw a widow weep, 'he had compassion on her,' Luke vii. 13. Upon that compassion he took away the occasion of her weeping. When God came to deliver Israel from the Egyptian bondage, he renders this reason of his purpose, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows,' Exod. v. 7. Yea, further, to demonstrate the notice which the Lord taketh of his saint's tears, there is in Scripture mention made of 'a bottle,' Ps. lvi. 8, wherein they are put, as a liquor most precious in God's account, and of a book wherein they are registered, as things to be reviewed and not forgotten.

Learn hereby to set a mean to mourning, 'Sorrow not as others which have no hope,' 1 Thess. iv. 13.

Know that God taketh notice of thy tears; believe that God can and will wipe them away. Believe this when sense and smart of affliction makes thee weep and wail, but especially when with a deep apprehension of thy sins against God, and of his displeasure against thee, thou doest, as Peter did, 'weep bitterly,' Mat. xxvi. 75. In these and other like cases, thou mayest and must pray as the psalmist did, and say, 'O Lord give ear unto my cry, hold not thy peace at my tears,' Ps. xxxix. 12. For assuredly, he that putteth tears into his bottle and registereth them will wipe all tears from thine eyes. What he hath done to others, thou being like to them, in like cases mayest expect; for God ever remaineth like himself.

Sec. 55. *Of saints' fallings by affliction.*

VI. *Great afflictions may foil saints.*<sup>1</sup> Though they be not utterly overthrown thereby, they may be, as a man in a quagmire, out of which he hath much ado to come, much foiled. In such a case was he who said, 'My feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped,' Ps. lxxxiii. 2; 'My foot slippeth,' Ps. xciv. 18; 'I am ready to halt,' Ps. xxxviii. 17; 'My flesh and my heart faileth,' Ps. lxxiii. 26; 'My strength faileth,' Ps. lxxi. 9; 'My spirit was overwhelmed,' Ps. lxxvii. 3; 'My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing,' Ps. xxxi. 10.

How it falls out that this thus befalls the saints, is shewed before, on ver. 7, sec. 44.

The apostle giveth a seasonable exhortation for preventing or redressing the danger of this infirmity, which is this, 'Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet: lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed,' Heb. xii. 12, 13. Hanging hands and feeble knees are the signs of a fainting spirit, and here put for that whereof they are signs.<sup>2</sup> To lift up these is to rouse up our spirits and to quicken them. The danger which otherwise may follow upon fainting much enforceeth the exhortation, for these words, 'lest that which is lame be turned out of the way,' imply that a fainting may follow a falling away. A fresh-water soldier once fainting soon falls to the enemy; let us therefore well look to our standing, and well prepare

<sup>1</sup> ויבך בכי גדול et flevit fletu magno.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Metonymia effecti et adjuncti.

ourselves beforehand. The apostle giveth an excellent direction to this purpose, Eph. vi. 10, 11, &c.

For particular directions to keep from fainting, read 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii. part 5, sec. 22.

Is the forementioned weakness of saints and proneness to fall well weighed of them who, by reason of some gifts bestowed on them, wax insolent and secure? Surely this is one use which is to be made of saints' falls, that no man boast himself of his own good deeds, when he beholdeth the storms of such men to be taken heed of, and wrecks to be bewailed.<sup>1</sup>

Sec. 56. *Of God's establishing the weak.*

VII. *God establisheth such as are ready to fall.*<sup>2</sup> This he did when he delivered this prophet's feet from falling. 'He that falleth,' saith the apostle, 'shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand,' Rom. xiv. 4. Very fitly to the point in hand saith the psalmist. 'He brought me up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings,' Ps. xl. 2. And again, 'When I said my foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up,' Ps. xciv. 18.

As God's power, so his pity and prudence are more clearly manifested hereby. Where the Lord saith, 'My strength is made perfect in weakness,' 2 Cor. xii. 9, he meaneth that the lower men be brought, and the more weak and unable to be established they may seem to be, the more divine is the power manifested to be whereby they are established; and then doth pity and mercy most brightly shew itself when in falling a man is preserved, so as if then he had not been preserved he had perished. Thus, Christ shewed his pity in saving Peter even when he began to sink, Mat. xiv. 30, 31. This then must needs be a principal part of prudence. In these and other like respects, God is so ready to uphold him that is falling and to hold him that is departing, that he may seem to mind such alone, and to leave all others.<sup>3</sup>

I. Despair not now though thy foot be slipping,

<sup>1</sup> Se nequaquam recte suis factis jactare audeat, cum videat tantorum virorum et candidas tempestates et flenda naufragia.—*Aug. de Doctr. Chr.* l. 3, c. 23. <sup>2</sup> Sec. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Sic paratus est Deus suscipere cadentem, et eripere fugientem, ut videri possit relictis omnibus aliis ei soli operam dare.—*Bern. in Ps. qui habit.*, Ser. ii.

or thou sinking in a sea of sorrows. God is as near at hand in all our troubles as Christ was in that sea where Peter was, Mat. xiv. 30, 31. As a tender mother, though she suffer her weak and feeble child to go alone, yet will she not suffer it to be alone or out of sight. If it slide or fall she presently catcheth it up again. Yea, she will give her servants charge over it to keep it, and to take it up in case it fall. Thus deals thy heavenly Father with thee, poor, weak, feeble brat. 'He will not suffer thy foot to be moved (namely to thy ruin); he that keepeth thee will not slumber,' Ps. cxxi. 3. And lest thou shouldst think that by reason of his greatness he will not take care of thee, 'He giveth his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone,' Ps. xc. 11, 12. Despair not, then. Mercy, grace, and indulgency is promised. Who can despair that knoweth and believeth this?<sup>1</sup>

2. When thou findest thyself sinking, and thinkest thyself lost, do as Peter did: 'Cry out to God, and say, Lord, save me,' Mat. xiv. 30. Call to mind his promise, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee,' Isa. xliii. 2. Plead his dealing with others whose feet he hath delivered from falling. Persuade thyself that thy heavenly Father as far surpasseth earthly parents in pity and goodness, as he doth in majesty and greatness. Hereupon ponder with thyself, and consider if earthly parents can suffer their children, when they are fallen, to lie and cry, and not come and take them up. 'Yea, they may. Yet will not I, saith the Lord, forget thee,' Isa. xlix. 15.<sup>2</sup> If now being fallen thou liest still and criest not for help, dost thou not justly deserve to be let alone, even for punishment of thy stoutness? Surely it becometh every soul to eye God continually, not only as an help at a pinch, but also as one that taketh the care and charge of us upon himself.

Sec. 57. *Of God's reasonable kindness.*

VIII. *God's remedy is answerable to man's necessity.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Noli desperare. Promissa est indulgentia tibi.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. ci.*

<sup>2</sup> Expediit omni animæ Deum semper attendere, tanquam proprium non modo adiutorem, sed etiam inspectorem.—*Bern. loc. citat.* <sup>3</sup> Sec. 49.



That which was a cloud in the day to shelter his people from the scorching heat of the sun, was a pillar of fire to give them light in the night, 'that they might go by day and by night,' Exod. xiii. 21. When they had no bread he 'rained down manna from heaven,' chap. xvi. 4. When they had no water he 'opened a rock, and gave them water to drink,' chap. xvii. 6. When they had water enough, but it was so bitter as they could not drink of it, he made it sweet, chap. xv. 25. When their enemies infested them, he overthrew those enemies, chap. xvii. 8. According to all their needs he afforded them fit help. Thus, while his people were in the wilderness, he gave extraordinary but visible demonstrations of his more invisible but ordinary providence towards his in all ages. Hereby is accomplished that of the psalmist, 'The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night,' Ps. cxxi. 6. Which not unfitly may be applied to men's several estates of prosperity and adversity.<sup>1</sup>

Remedies answerable to men's necessities are seasonable; seasonable remedies are profitable; profitable remedies are acceptable; acceptable remedies are most available to provoke men to all gratitude; gratitude makes them diligent in observing what may most make to the honour of God, and zealous in promoting the same. Thus the very kind of remedy which God affordeth, maketh most to man's good and his own glory.

Learn hence wisdom of this wise God; and that in two especial points:

I. Seek of him such things as are seasonable for thee to receive, as they who in the days of Christ's flesh came to him for succour—the blind for sight, the deaf for hearing, the dumb for speech, the lame for sound limbs, and so others for a remedy fit for their particular malady. Answerably, Art thou in danger of death? seek preservation from death with a reservation to God's good pleasure. Doth any anguish so work on thine inward passion as to force tears from thine eyes? pray to have those tears wiped away. Dost thou find thy feet sliding, thy spirit fainting, desire God either to keep thee from

falling or to raise thee again, and to revive thy spirit. Seek not unecessaries; seek not superfluities; seek not to satisfy thy lusts. Well weigh what an apostle saith in this case, 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts,' James iv. 3.

2. Let thy kindness be as seasonable as thou canst. Give bread to him that is hungry, drink to him that is athirst. Endeavour to allay the passion of such as are in passion; raise up those that are fallen. Instruct the ignorant; bring into the way of truth such as wander. Comfort such as are troubled in conscience. Herein lieth a main difference betwixt a skilful physician and a deceitful empiric. The physician inquireth after the kind of disease, constitution of person, temperature of climate, season of year, and answerably prescribeth his remedy. The empiric gives his remedy without any respect to the forenamed respects. If it do any good, then it is well; if it do none, it was all that he could do: and by that *all* many more receive hurt than good by his prescripts. To be an empiric about the maladies that affect the soul, and endanger the eternal salvation thereof, is insufferable. Do, therefore, good. Do it, as David did, 'according to the integrity of thine heart, by the skilfulness of thine hands,' Ps. lxxviii. 72. For which end pray for wisdom of him that is wisdom itself, that so thou mayest 'be perfect as he is perfect,' Mat. v. 48.

Hitherto of the prophet's protestation for his inward disposition.

Sec. 58. *Of the meaning and parts of the 9th verse.*

Ver. 9. *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*

The prophet's protestation<sup>1</sup> for his outward conversation is here generally propounded.

This phrase, 'I will walk,' is taken diversely. Some take it for an expression of his confidence in the continuance of God's favour towards him; that God, who had freed him out of the jaws of death, would now continue him in the land of the living, there to remain and abide before the Lord. Ancient English translators inclining to this sense, thus interpret it: 'I shall walk,' in relation to the divine

<sup>1</sup> *Reddetur populo felicitas pristina quam aliquando habuere in eremo, procedente Domino eos per diem in columna nubis, et per noctem in columna ignis, ut nec in prosperis, nec in adversis aliquando turbentur.—Hier. Comment. in Isa. iv.*

<sup>1</sup> See sec. 2, 43.

providence whereby he should be preserved yet longer to live on earth; so as, according to this acception, to 'walk before the Lord' is to live to advance the glory of God. A pious interpretation this is. But this phrase of 'walking before the Lord' is in Scripture most frequently used to set out a duty on man's part rather than a kindness on God's part; for God requireth it of Abraham as a duty, Gen. xvii. 1. and commendeth David for it, 2 Chron. vi. 16. as for a duty performed by him. To this acception do the king's translators incline, and translate it as a promise made on the prophet's part to God, thus: 'I will walk.' By this manner of expressing his purpose under a solemn promise he bindeth himself to perform the duty promised. This word, 'walk,' importeth a motion, and a proceeding on in that motion, step by step, from place to place. Metaphorically it is taken for a practice of good or evil. The words joined with it will shew what kind of practice it importeth: 'To walk in the way of the wicked,' 1 Kings xv. 26, is to practise evil; 'To walk after other gods,' Jer. vii. 6, is to practise idolatry; but 'To walk in the law of the Lord,' Ps. cxix. 1, is to practise what that law requireth; 'To walk in righteousness,' Isa. xxxiii. 15, is to practise and deal righteously. The verb in the Hebrew is of the seventh conjugation,<sup>1</sup> which implieth a reciprocation or reiteration of an action. Some learned and judicious expositors, to express the emphasis of the conjugation, thus translate it: 'I will continually walk.'<sup>2</sup>

These words, 'before the Lord,' (לפני יהוה),—word for word, 'at the face,' or, 'in the presence of the Lord,'—do determine the kind of walking which he intendeth,—namely, such a one as he would not be afraid or ashamed that the Lord should see, but such a walking as the Lord should well like and approve. In other places to this kind of walking these phrases are added, 'with God,' Gen. v. 21, (את־האלהים); 'after the Lord,' 2 Kings xxiii. 3, (אחרי יהוה); 'worthy of the Lord,' Col. i. 10, (ἀξίως εἰς Κεφαλῆς); all which in effect import one and the same thing. He that 'walks with

God,' so carrieth himself as knowing God is by him. He that 'walks after the Lord,' behaveth himself as a servant following his master, and is ever at hand to do what his master requireth. He that 'walks worthy of the Lord,' so demeaneth himself as becometh a servant of the Lord, so as the Lord may be honoured by him. He that 'walketh before the Lord,' doeth all things as in the sight of the Lord, whom he knoweth to be 'everywhere present,' Ps. cxxxix. 7, to 'see in the dark as well as in the light,' ver. 12, and to be 'a searcher of the heart,' Jer. xvii. 10; and thereby he is moved in all places open and secret, at all times, day and night, in deed, in word, in thought, to have such respect to God as to do nothing but that he which seeth it may approve it, nor to make show of more than he intendeth, but to do the good which he doeth sincerely, 'heartily, as to the Lord,' Col. iii. 23; Heb. xi. 5. The apostle, that was guided by the same Spirit that he which penned Enoch's history was, having relation to that history, saith, 'Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.' What Moses styleth 'walking with God,' the apostle expoundeth 'pleasing God.' The intent therefore of the psalmist here is to endeavour to please God.

That this intention of his may not seem to be put off till it be too late, and he in the grave, where none can walk, where no work can be done, he addeth the place where he would so walk, 'In the land of the living.' On earth there be divers divisions for habitation, and therefore he expresseth the word in the plural number thus, 'in the regions,' (בארצות, *in regionibus*), implying that in what place soever he should be, he would 'walk before the Lord.'

The living are here opposed to the dead; so as 'the land of the living' is a description of the place and time where and while men live in this world. In this sense is this phrase frequently used in the Old Testament. In another psalm this time of life is styled 'the light of the living,' Ps. lvi. 13, in opposition to death, which is thus described, 'A land of darkness, as darkness itself,' Job x. 22.

Thus this verse setteth out the duty of him that is delivered from a deadly danger; concerning which here is expressed,—

<sup>1</sup> Hithpael.

<sup>2</sup> אֲתֵדָבֵר. Indesinenter ambulabo.—*Tren. and Jan.* Triplex est significatio Hithpael: 1. Reciproca; 2. Passiva; 3. Frequentativa.

1. The matter—'I will walk.'

2. The manner—'Before the Lord.'

3. The place and time—'In the land of the living.'

This promise of walking, being inferred upon his former profession of his affection towards God, and resolution to rest on him, sheweth that,—

I. Man's inward affection to God must be manifested by his outward conversation.

The metaphor of walking, which is a going on and proceeding forward, and the conjugation wherein the word is used, which noteth a reiteration, giveth us to understand that,—

II. Saints must proceed in their approved practice.

The rule that he prescribeth to himself for his walking, which is this, 'Before the Lord,' teacheth that,—

III. Eye must be had to God in every action.

The description of the place, in this phrase, 'The land of the living,' declareth that,—

IV. This world is a place and time of life.

The end of describing this place and time thus, which is to set out the proper place and seasonable time of walking before God, importeth that,—

V. While men live they must endeavour to please God.

The manner of expressing this duty under a solemn promise thus, 'I will walk,' implieth that,—

VI. Saints must bind themselves to duty.

The inference of this verse, wherein his duty is declared, upon the former, wherein God's kindness is manifested, demonstrateth that,—

VII. Manifestation of God's good pleasure to man, must make man careful to please God.

### Sec. 59. Of practising duty.

I. Man's inward affection to God must be manifested by his outward conversation. It is usual with the Holy Ghost to infer upon fear and love of God (which are the two principal affections whereby our high esteem of God and due respect to him are manifested) a walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments; thus, 'Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways,' Ps. cxxviii. 1; 'Fear God, and keep his commandments,' Eccles. xii. 13; 'Love the Lord, and walk in his

ways,' Deut. xi. 22, and xix. 9; 'This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments,' 1 John v. 3. The duty comprised under this metaphor of walking is oft and much pressed throughout the Scripture, and that under this very word. It is commanded, Gen. xvii. 1, Deut. x. 12; commended, Gen. vi. 9, Luke i. 6; rewarded, Gen. v. 24; and thereupon conscientiously hath been, 2 Kings xx. 3, and still must be, observed: and that in regard of—

1. God's glory.

2. Others' good.

3. Our own good.

1. By practice it is that the virtues or 'praises of him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light,' 1 Pet. ii. 9, are shewed forth. Thus 'men may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven,' Mat. v. 16. Good cause, therefore, had the Lord to say, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit,' John xv. 8.

2. By practice it is that such as are called are stirred up to a holy emulation, Heb. xii. 1, (for they that walk aright become ensamples, 1 Thes. i. 7, 2 Cor. ix. 2, to others;) and such as are not called may either be won, 1 Pet. iii. 1, 2, or have their mouths stopped, ver. 16.

3. By practice it is, that sincerity of heart, integrity of conscience, soundness of faith, and truth of all graces are manifested, cherished, and increased. Yea, and the presence of God's Spirit in us testified.<sup>1</sup> Hereby inward assurance is gained, and outward evidence is given, of our election before the world, and of our salvation after the world. Many judgments are by this walking prevented, or removed, or mitigated, or sanctified, and everlasting perdition avoided. If motives may be of force to provoke us to perform a duty, motives are not wanting to provoke us to this duty of walking, as here it is professed.

What may now be thought of such as having attained to a sufficient measure of knowledge, and are with that which they know of God, and of his kind dealing with them, inwardly affected, and are thereupon moved to profess as much love as the prophet

<sup>1</sup> Fidem tuam dilectio animet, probet actio.—*Bern. super Cant.*, Serm. xxx. Testimonium presentie Spiritus prebent opera.—*Idem de S. Andr.*, Serm. ii.

here doth, but yet fail in performance, in practice? They walk not. Their apprehension, affection, profession are all in vain, except to be as so many evidences against them, to make them the more inexcusable, and to aggravate their judgment the more. I deny not but that knowledge of God and of his favour towards us, a good liking thereof, and a cheerful acknowledgment and profession of what we know, are very needful and useful. For walking without knowledge must needs be preposterous and erroneous; without a good affection, hypocritical and vain; and without a free profession, too too timorous. So as these three are necessary, though not sufficient. Question may be made of the truth of them all, where they are not sealed and ratified by an answerable walking and practice. And adversaries of the truth will take the more occasion to slander the truth. Our adversaries do much urge against us and our profession that we walk not, that we practise not, and allege this against our profession, to impeach the integrity of our religion; which should make us more conscionable in shewing forth our good works, for stopping of their mouths. Our doctrine is even in this point, as in others, sound and orthodox. In schools, in churches, by preaching, by printing, we teach a necessity of walking, of practising, of doing good works, according to this rule of the apostle, Tit. iii. 14, 'Let ours learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.' And we acknowledge them to be so necessary, as without them we cannot be saved.<sup>2</sup>

The ground of their evilling against our doctrine about good works is, because we do not set too high a price upon them and make them meritorious, which is to make them no good works, but proud, presumptuous, damnable, diabolical works. There be many forcible reasons for the necessity of good works, though that vain, frothy, windy, false, arrogant, impious, blasphemous reason of merit be not pressed. They are expressly commanded of God; therefore necessary. Though they be not the cause of reigning, yet they are the way to the kingdom, out of

which way we cannot attain to the kingdom; therefore necessary. Though the faithful are not justified by them, yet by them is their faith justified, James ii. 22; therefore necessary. Though the doing of them do not merit eternal life, yet the not doing of them meriteth everlasting death, Mat. xxv. 41, 42; therefore necessary. Though by the strict standard of the law, being found unperfect, they are rejected, yet by the gracious mitigation of the gospel, being found sincere, they are accepted; therefore necessary. Though when we shall have done all those things which are commanded us we are unprofitable servants, Luke xvii. 10, yet by doing according to our ability what we are commanded we shew ourselves grateful children; therefore are good works necessary. This last motive is of more moment with an ingenuous child than any merit can be; for, when the believer thoroughly pondereth the free grace and rich mercy of God in giving him Christ, in accepting him in Christ, in pardoning all his sins, in reserving eternal life for him, his heart is so inflamed with a desire of testifying all gratefulness, as he is ready with his uttermost power to do whatsoever he may know to be well-pleasing unto God. Now God's word declaring that 'to do good is a sacrifice well-pleasing to God,' Heb. xiii. 16, the forenamed desire doth more enforce him to do good than the merit of many heavens could. Gratefulness more worketh on an ingenuous spirit than reward can. And that which in way of gratefulness is wrought is much more kindly wrought than that which is done for recompence. Answerably it is also more acceptable to God, for it manifesteth a better respect towards him.

2. Ye that have tasted of the bounty of the Lord, and are well informed in his good-will towards you, and thereupon have your hearts inflamed with the heavenly fire of love, and are stirred up to purpose and promise to approve yourselves to him, have a care of your carriage, and ratify the truth of all by an answerable walking. Sweet is that melody and happy is that harmony where mind, heart, tongue, life, and all consent to make a concert. Say, there-

<sup>1</sup> Ne scientiam tibi satisfacere putes, propterea adjeicit: Qui ambulat, &c.—*Basil. in Psalm cxvii.*

<sup>2</sup> Oro ut ad agenda bona opera festinemus. Neque enim aliter salvari nos possibile est.—*Chryss., Hom. 47, in Gen. xiii.*

<sup>1</sup> Via regni, non causa regnandi.—*Bern. de Grat. et lib. arbit.*

<sup>2</sup> Ut ad meritum satis est de meritis non presumere: sic carere meritis, satis est ad iudicium.—*Bern. sup. Cant., Serm. lxviii.*

fore, (and do as ye say.) I will walk; and that with such a mind as is set out in the next doctrine.

Sec. 60. *Of persisting in good courses.*

II. *Saints must proceed in their approved practice.*<sup>1</sup> They must not be 'weary in well-doing,' Gal. vi. 9. 'Mark them,' saith the apostle, 'which walk so as they have us for an example,' Phil. iii. 17. What kind of walking doth he mean? He himself hath plainly and fully expressed it in the verses before. It was this, 'To follow on,' ver. 12. 'To reach forth unto the things which are before,' ver. 13. 'To press toward the mark,' ver. 14. From this his walking and proceeding on he maketh this inference, 'Let us walk by the same rule,' ver. 16, or as some not unfitly translate it, 'let us proceed;' for the word<sup>2</sup> which the apostle useth properly signifieth to go on in order. The virtue of such as appertain to the kingdom of heaven is in this proceeding set out by many metaphors: as 'the shining of light more and more unto perfect day,' Prov. iv. 18; 'the waters of the sanctuary, which increased from ankle deep to knee deep, from thence up to the loins, and after to such depth as could not be passed over,' Ezek. xlvii. 2, &c.; an edifice, that from the foundation riseth higher and higher till it be a complete building, Eph. ii. 21; runners in a race, which run on till they come to the goal, 1 Cor. ix. 24; plants, palm-trees, and cedars, which all grow till they come to their full growth, Ps. xcii. 12; corn, Mat. iv. 27, and mustard-seed, which grow to ripeness, ver. 32; and a body, which groweth to the full stature thereof, Eph. iv. 16.

To leave all the metaphors but that which is in my text, the way wherein we must walk is a long way; while here we live we cannot attain to our journey's end; we must therefore walk as long as we live, and still go on. As we must not turn back again—'If any draw back, my soul,' saith the Lord, 'shall have no pleasure in him,' Heb. x. 38—so may we not stand at a stay. He that beginneth a building, and continueth not till it be finished, maketh himself ridiculous to all that see it, Luke xiv. 30. He that beginneth the Christian race, and giveth

over before he come to the end, doth not only lose the crown, but treasureth up wrath unto himself. This will assuredly fall out if we proceed not daily in our Christian course. For one of these two things will fall out: either to go on, or to fall back.<sup>1</sup>

Let all that set foot in the race to heaven hence learn to take to themselves an invincible resolution to 'run the race that is set before them,' Heb. xii. 1, (*τρέξαμεν τὸν ἀγωνα.*) He saith not to run 'in the race,' but to 'run the race,' which phrase implieth a holding out till it be finished. All that run would willingly obtain. Yea, God would have us 'so run as we may obtain,' 1 Cor. ix. 24. But this cannot be without perseverance, and that to the end of our life; for the goal is set at the last period of life. Let our eye be thereupon, more minding what is to come than what is past. As many as will be perfect must be thus minded. A folesettled resolution is of great force to make us hold out; and that we may the more fully express that which is implied in the very conjugation<sup>2</sup> here used, which implieth a reiteration of the action, let us, year after year, month after month, Sabbath after Sabbath, yea, day after day, call to mind how we have the last year, the last month, the last week, the last day walked, and stir up ourselves to walk on. Every morning when we rise let us, as travellers and pilgrims in this world, think upon our journey to the heavenly Canaan, and make account of walking on forward towards it. This is it which the prophet here professeth to do. Now having taken to ourselves such a resolution, that we may not preposterously or deceitfully persist to walk, let us take for a further direction the third observation.

Sec. 61. *Of setting God before us in all that we do.*

III. *Eye must be had to God in every action.*<sup>3</sup> All that was before alleged, for walking must be restrained to this kind of walking, 'before the Lord.'<sup>4</sup> The Scripture doth so restrain it everywhere. The

<sup>1</sup> Unum necesse est e duobus, aut proficere scilicet, aut prorsus deficere.—*Ber. de 3 Ord. Eccl.*

<sup>2</sup> אֲתֵּדָרֵךְ in Hithpael. Verba in hac conjugatione significant vehementiam aut frequentiam.—*Pagn. Institut. Hebr.*

<sup>3</sup> Sec. 58.

<sup>4</sup> In omnibus quæ agis Deum esse presentem cognosce.—*Evern. Medit. Devot. cap. vi.*

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 57.

<sup>2</sup> στοιχῶν ἐν στοιχοῖς, dicitur ordo in acie, a fronte ad extremam agmen porrectus.—*Thuc.* l. iv.

charge given to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1, to walk, was thus qualified. The walking of Enoch, chap. v. 24; Noah, chap. vi. 9; Abraham, chap. xxiv. 40; David, 1 Kings viii. 25; Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx. 3; Josiah, chap. xxxiii. 3; Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke i. 6; recorded and commended by the Holy Ghost, was thus qualified. Other walking, as after other gods, Deut. xi. 28; in the counsel of the wicked, Ps. i. 1; after the lusts of our own hearts, is a wretched, a cursed walking, Jude 16. It were much better to sit still than so to walk.

'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,' Prov. xv. 3; from his presence we cannot withdraw ourselves, Ps. cxxxix. 7. There is not a word in our tongue but he knoweth it; he understandeth our thoughts; he is acquainted with all our ways, Ps. cxxxix. 4, 2, 3. And as thus he is privy to all our thoughts, words, deeds, and ways, so 'will he bring every work to judgment, with every secret thing,' Eccl. xii. 14. What he approves shall be both accepted and rewarded, Mat. xxv. 21. Is there not now good cause to walk before the Lord? Is there not need of great watchfulness, living before the eyes of that Judge which seeth all things?<sup>1</sup>

1. Woe be to you, atheistical fools, 'in whose thoughts God is not,' Ps. x. 4; who 'say in your heart, There is no God,' Ps. xiv. 1; or being convinced even 'by the things that are made,' Rom. i. 20, that there is 'an eternal power and deity,' seemingly say, 'how doth God know?' Job xxii. 13, 14, 'can he judge through the dark cloud?' This God is not far from you, Acts xvii. 27. He is before you though you see him not; and he will set you before himself, when to your terror you shall see him, and 'say to the mountains and rocks, fall upon us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne,' Rev. vi. 16.

2. Woe also to you, hypocrites, who do all that you do 'to be seen of men,' Mat. vi. 1, xxiii. 25. Ye fools and blind, whether is it better to be approved, accepted, rewarded of God, or man? What is man's applause, man's praise? Is it not a wind that passeth so soon as it cometh? Is it not as ice that melteth in the handling? If it continued, what could it do?

<sup>1</sup> Magna custodia tibi necessaria est, quoniam ante oculos Judicis vivis cuncta cernentis.—*Ber. loc. citat.*

Even as wind in your body—puff you up, make you swell: as the people's applause made Herod swell so big, Acts xii. 22, 23, as the angel of the Lord was fain to lance him; and what then issued from him? worms, that made him a terror to all that beheld them. Repent, therefore, O atheists and hypocrites, of this your wickedness.

3. And ye that have better understanding of God and of his all-seeing eye, who make more account of his approbation and remuneration, wheresoever thou art, whatsoever thou art about, whether alone or in company, whether about duties of piety or duties of civility, at your vocation or recreation, at table or in bed, lying down or rising up,—in all places, at all times, set the Lord before you: and 'walk before the Lord.' A heathen philosopher advised young men to set Cato, or Lælius, or some other good men before them, that so they might carry themselves and do all things as if he looked upon them.<sup>1</sup> This was but an imagination, and yet might it be of some use. But to see God before us is not a mere imagination. He is indeed always before us. If an imagination of a mortal man's presence be of any use, what is the apprehension of the true presence of the immortal God! Therefore, no better direction can be given to keep men in compass. For by this means,

1. We shall be restrained from many sins, whereunto secrecy of place, solicitation of superiors, or other temptations might otherwise allure us.<sup>2</sup> This restrained righteous Joseph, when, by his mistress in a secret chamber, they two alone together, he was tempted to folly. This answer, 'How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?' sheweth that he set God before him, and thereby was kept from yielding to that temptation, Gen. xxxix. 9; Ps. cxix. 168.

2. We shall be moved to keep our hearts upright. Where Hezekiah professeth that he 'walked before God,' Isa. xxxviii. 3, he addeth, 'in truth, and with a perfect (or upright) heart.' Hereby he implieth, that his setting of God before him made him more

<sup>1</sup> Aliquis vir bonus eligendus est, ac semper ante oculos ponendus, ut sic tanquam illo spectante vivamus, &c.—*Sæc.*, ep. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Thales dixit, homines existimare oportere, Deum omnia cernere, Dei omnia esse plena: fore enim homines castiores.—*Cic., de leg.*

watchful over his heart to keep it upright. No such means as this to make a man upright; for he that walketh before God, knoweth that God is 'a searcher of the heart.' As the presence of men makes us careful of our outward actions, so the presence of God will make us 'keep our hearts above all keeping.' Prov. iv. 23. ככל נישבר

3. We shall be brought into a holy familiarity with God, so as he will account us his friends. Abraham was a man that 'walked before God,' Gen. xxiv. 40; and God himself giveth him this style, 'My friend,' Isa. xli. 8. This makes us seek how to please God; and answerably God most kindly accepteth this our mind and endeavour.

4. We shall have much confidence in God's providence, protection, and in all manner of divine blessing wrought in us. When Abraham's servant made some question of success in that business whereabout his master sent him, Abraham thus resolveth the doubt, and setteth the mind of his servant, 'The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way,' Gen. xxiv. 40. Because he walked before the Lord he assured himself of success.

5. We shall, with much assurance of faith, call upon God in our greatest distresses. Conscience of walking before God added much power to Hezekiah's prayer and faith, as is evident by his putting God in mind thereof, where he saith, 'O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee,' 2 Kings xx. 3.

6. We shall be encouraged against the slanders of malicious adversaries, Job xvi. 19; Joshua xxii. 22. For though such as have approved themselves to men may notwithstanding have cause to fear that God may have something against them, yet they who have been careful to approve themselves to God need not care what man can say against them. When David's enemies laid many matters unjustly to his charge he appeals to God, Ps. xxvi. 1, which he durst not have done if he had not walked before God.

7. We shall be emboldened against all that man can do against us. This is rendered as a reason why Moses feared not the wrath of the king, 'For he endured, as seeing him who is invisible,' Heb. xi. 27. This put life in Jehoshaphat's fainting spirit. For where he saith, 'We know not what to do,' he

bewrayeth a languishing spirit, 2 Chron. xx. 12; but where he addeth, 'Our eyes are upon thee,' he manifesteth a revived spirit.

8. We shall persevere and hold out so long as we live. For God before whom we walk ever liveth, ever remaineth the same, which men do not. While good Jehoiada lived, king Joash maintained true religion; when Jehoiada died he revolted, 2 Chron. xxiv. 17. Because he walked before a mortal man, with the death of that man he fell away. But Hezekiah, who walked before the immortal God, ever remained faithful.

Sec. 62. *Of the land of the living here on earth.*

IV. *This world is a place and time of life.*<sup>1</sup> Thus he that expected succour from the Lord in this world saith, 'I believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living,' Ps. xxvii. 13; and in the very same sense said to God, 'Thou art my portion in the land of the living,' Ps. cxlii. 5. And where it is said to the wicked man, whose memory God would destroy in this world, 'God shall pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place;' by way of exaggeration of the same judgment it is added, 'and root thee out of the land of the living,' Ps. lii. 5. When Hezekiah expected nothing but death, he said, 'I shall see the Lord no more in the land of the living,' Isa. xxxviii. 11; and to shew what he meant thereby he addeth, 'I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.' Thus also is Christ's death set out, 'He was cut off out of the land of the living,'<sup>2</sup> Isa. liii. 8, that being dead in earth after that life which he had there lived he might for ever live in heaven. In this sense the time while we live in this world is called 'the day,' and 'the light of the living,' John ix. 4; Ps. lvi. 13.

Fitly is this world so called in relation to all kind of lives, natural, spiritual, eternal.

1. Natural life, which is subject to mortality, corruption, and all manner of infirmities, is here only in this world lived. After this life, 'corruptible must put on incorruption, and mortal must put on immortality,' 1 Cor. xv. 53. This life was meant

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Abscissus est de terrâ viventium, ut post vitam quam vixit in terrâ, mortuus terræ, coelis viveret in æternum.—*Hier. Comment.*, lib. xiv., in Isa. liii.

when Hezekiah's departure out of this world was thus threatened, 'Thou shalt not live,' Isa. xxxviii. 1.

2. Spiritual life, which is the life of grace, is also lived in this world. For the apostle speaking of it thus saith, 'The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith,' &c., Gal. ii. 20.

3. In this world we first 'lay hold on eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 12. They that do not here get a right unto it shall not hereafter attain to the possession thereof.

How unmeet, how shameful, how odious a thing is it that dead men should be here on the face of the earth, which is 'the land of the living!' That there are such is too true. 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth,' 1 Tim. v. 6; 'Sardis had a name that she lived, but was dead,' Rev. iii. 1; 'The dead bury their dead,' Mat. viii. 22; all natural men are 'dead in sins,' Eph. ii. 1, 2 Cor. v. 14. Much more they that unto their natural corruption add profaneness, uncleanness, all manner of riotousness. These are as dead and putrefied carriages that infest the air round about them. To prevent noisome savours which might arise from dead corpses, we use to bury them under the ground. Though Sarah was a dear wife to Abraham, yet when she was dead he took order to 'bury her corpse out of his sight,' Gen. xxiii. 4. Note the care that was taken to 'bury Gog with his multitude,' Ezek. xxxix. 11, &c., because the stinking savour was so great as 'it caused them that passed by to stop their noses.' Assuredly if the spiritual sense of our souls were as quick in spiritual matters as the senses of our body are in earthly things, we should feel a more noisome and loathsome savour to arise from such as in relation to spiritual life are dead, than from such as are dead in relation to natural life. God, that is most sensible of this spiritual stench, is oft moved to sweep the land of the living with the broom of his judgments, and to remove noisome dead persons, especially when by their multitude they cause the stench to be too too intolerable: 'I will sweep Babel with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts,' Isa. xiv. 23. Thus the Lord swept away the stinking carriages of the old world, Gen. vi. 7; and of Sodom and Gomorrah, chap. xix. 25; the rebellious carcasses of the Israelites in

the wilderness, Heb. iii. 17; the foul corpse of the nations, Lev. xviii. 28; yea, and the unsavoury bodies of all Israel, 2 Kings xvii. 6, and Judah, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Of Jerusalem, in another metaphor, thus saith the Lord, 'I will wipe it as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down,' 2 Kings xxi. 13. There is just cause to fear that the stench of the sins of this city and other places in this land was so rank in the nostrils of the Almighty as thereby he was provoked to sweep away so many as he did with the broom of the pestilence. If it be said that many righteous ones were swept away, who have presented even their bodies as well as their souls a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable, and of a sweet smelling savour unto God, and many wicked ones left; I answer, that God may take away in a common judgment many righteous ones, the more to aggravate the judgment, and yet therein shew mercy to those righteous ones by translating them to eternal bliss, and reserve wicked ones to bring them by that judgment executed on others to repentance, or else to make them the more inexcusable. The day of thorough cleansing the Lord's floor is not till the day of judgment: 'The harvest is the end of the world. Then shall the Son of man send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire,' Mat. xiii. 39, 41, 42. Yet, lest the stench of sin even in this land of the living should be too great, as in former ages, so now in our days hath he swept away many stinking carriages, and rid the city and other places of such as were spiritually dead, which he hath done for terror to those that remain.

2. As for such as are desirous to make use of all the evidences of God's fatherly favour to them, let this condition of this present world wherein they live, expressed under this phrase, 'the land of the living,' move them to 'carry themselves as in a land of the living, and that—

(1.) By nourishing and preserving natural life, both in themselves and others. For this end Christ hath prescribed to us this petition, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' To cast thyself, or to take another, out of the land of the living, before God doth manifest his good pleasure for thy departure,



is, for aught thou knowest to the contrary, to cast both into everlasting death.

(2.) By living a spiritual life. This is the time for attaining grace, wherein spiritual life consisteth. If it be not here had, it can never be had.

(3.) By making sure to thyself eternal life, that thus thou mayest more comfortably and joyfully leave this land of the living when the Lord shall call thee, upon assurance of going to another and to a better land of the living.

To enforce these duties, the first collection is of especial force.

Sec. 63. *Of pleasing God in this life.*

V. *While men live they must endeavour to please God.*<sup>1</sup> This the apostle intendeth under this phrase, 'As we have opportunity let us do good,' Gal. vi. 10. The word (*καιρος*) translated opportunity, signifieth, in a large acceptation, a seasonableness of circumstance, whether of time, place, or any occasion, but most properly a seasonable time, and so is it there taken by most translators and expositors, and thus turned, while we have time,<sup>2</sup>—that is, while here we live. Thus Hezekiah, speaking of the time past, the time that he had lived on earth, saith, 'I have walked,' &c., Isa. xxxviii. 3. The like is noted of all whose walking before God is commended in Scripture. Of Enoch it is expressly said, that before his translation he had this testimony, that he had pleased God, Heb. xi. 5.

Where the Lord is, and manifesteth his presence, there must men 'walk before him,' and endeavour to please him. 'But the earth is the Lord's footstool, whereon he standeth,' Mat. v. 35; 'He filleth earth,' Jer. xxiii. 24; 'His eyes are in every place,' Prov. xv. 3. On earth, therefore, even everywhere, must men 'walk before the Lord.'

The rather must this be done on earth, because the earth is a place of probation, and the time that we live thereon a time of preparation to fit us for our perpetual abode with God in heaven.<sup>3</sup> They that here learn to walk purely before God shall hereafter 'walk with him in white,' Rev. iii. 4:

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 57.      <sup>2</sup> Dum tempus habemus.—*Pet. Lat. Bc.*

<sup>3</sup> See "The Plaster for the Plague," on Num. xvi. 48, Sec. 65. Sic in hoc mundo vivere debemus, ut cum corpus ceciderit a veribus devorari, anima letetur cum sanctis in celo.—*Ber. Medit. Devot.*, cap. 16.

namely, in the bright and pure robes of immortality and glory for ever. In this respect, we ought so to live in this world as, when the body shall begin to be devoured of worms in the grave, the soul may rejoice with the saints in heaven.

1. Extremely blind and egregiously foolish are they who dissolutely pass over their time in the land of the living, and lose the blessed opportunity that therein is afforded unto them for assuring them of the blessed fruition of God in heaven. Some pass over this precious time in idleness, as the 'foolish virgins,' Mat. xxv. 8, &c., who, when they were passing out of this land of the living, then thought of walking before the Lord; but it proved too late. Others pass it over in riotousness, and, not thinking that the Lord would come so soon as he cometh, are taken as the lewd servant was, Mat. xxiv. 50, 51, upon whom his master suddenly came and cut him off. Though all be uncertain of the time allotted unto them for remaining in the land of the living, yet most put off this duty of 'walking' therein 'before the Lord' from one time to another, and are oft cut out of this land before their supposed time be come. The 'rich fool,' in that night wherein he counted upon many years' abode, was taken away, Luke xii. 19, 20. They who are young imagine that they may abide in the land of the living till they come to ripe years, and then think it will be time enough to walk before the Lord; others, that are come to ripe years, conceive they may continue longer, till they come to their full strength; others, till they be old, and that then it will be time enough; and none almost so old but he thinks he may live a year longer<sup>4</sup> and so still puts off this duty, supposing that it will be time soon enough when they are going out of the world; and thus by these vain pretences they abide as dead men, men dead in sins, in the 'land of the living,' and so deprive themselves of that crown of life, for obtaining whereof a race is set before them in this 'land of the living.' So foolish are many, as they seek a blessed life in the region of death. But it is not there; for how can a blessed life be there, where there is not life?<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Nemo est tam senex, qui se annua non potest vivere.—*Cic. de Senect.*

<sup>5</sup> Beatam vitam queritis in regione mortis: non est illuc. Quomodo enim vita beata, ubi nec vita?—*Iug. Confess.*, lib. iv. cap. 12.

2. It will be our wisdom, who through the divine providence are yet in the 'land of the living.'—notwithstanding that many younger than ourselves have been taken out before us—even 'to-day, while it is called to-day,' to apply our hearts to wisdom, and to 'walk before the Lord.'<sup>1</sup> Our Lord Christ took the opportunity that he had in 'the land of the living,' and saith, 'I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day,' John ix. 4. He adds this weighty reason thereof, 'The night cometh when no man can work.' On this ground, the wise man adviseth us all so to do, ' 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,' Eccles. ix. 10. Let this, therefore, be thy mind towards God, that though he cut thee off never so soon, yet he shall not cut thee off before thou hast walked before him, in that now, whilst thou art in 'the land of the living,' thou walkest before him. But if he preserve thee long in 'the land of the living,' thou wilt long 'walk before him.' And in this respect life is a sweet and a precious thing; and we may, with a willing submission of our will to God's, desire long to abide in 'the land of the living,' Isa. xxxviii. 11, that we may long 'walk before the Lord.' This was it that upon the summons of death perplexed Hezekiah, that he should 'not see the Lord in the land of the living,' Isa. xxxviii. 11. But, when his life was prolonged, then in a holy gratulation he thus singeth out to the Lord, 'The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day,' Isa. xxxviii. 19, whereby he teacheth us a lesson that he ratified by his own example, that it is the duty of the living, while they are in the 'land of the living,' to praise the Lord. O blessed land, that affordeth us opportunity to perform such a duty! O blessed inhabitants, that take the opportunity of such a land to perform such a duty!

Sec. 64. *Of binding ourselves to duty.*

VI. *Saints must bind themselves to bounden duties.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Salutein n-straum instanter oremus, neque presentis vite perdamus occasione.—*Chrys. ad Pop.*, hom. 25. *Legē Ibid.*, hom. 39, hæc de re plura.

<sup>2</sup> There being in the 14th verse express mention made of the prophet's vow, and a solemn promise to God coming near to a sacred vow, the application of such points as shall there be

I say bounden duties,<sup>1</sup> because such a one was that which here the prophet binds himself unto, to walk before the Lord; and because otherwise we may bring ourselves into needless snares, by overmuch forwardness in binding ourselves. This manner of absolute promising such duties hath ever been usual among saints, Exod. xv. 2; Joshua xxiv. 15; Ruth i. 16; Ps. ix. 1. Some have gone so far, as to express their promise in form of a sacred vow, Gen. xxviii. 10. Others, by a solemn covenant, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31. Holy ardency hath moved others to add an oath thereto, Chron. xv. 14, Ps. cxix. 106. Yea, and an execration also, Neh. v. 13.

*Quest.* Is it in man's power to perform that bounden duty he oweth to God? If not, how can he absolutely promise to do it?

*Ans.* 1. That which saints in this case promise, is to do their best and uttermost endeavour. More we are not bound to promise. More will none that are wise promise. This is that which the apostle thus professeth of himself, 'Herein I exercise, or endeavour myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men,' Acts xxiv. 16.

2. The things which God by virtue of the gospel requireth of us, he hath promised to work in us. The sum of his promise is this, 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them,' Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Now saints resting in assurance of faith on God for accomplishing of this, and other like promises, are emboldened to promise that to God which God hath promised to enable them to do, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34, and xxxii. 39, 40.

3. All the promises of obedience which saints make to God, they make with reference to the assistance of God's Spirit, whereof they assure themselves. As when they promise any temporal civil matter, they do it, either expressly or implicitly, with relation to God's will and leave, as they ought, James iv. 15, so in holy duties to the work of God's Spirit in them.<sup>2</sup>

delivered about a vow, will be the same that should here have been delivered about a sacred and solemn promise. I do therefore refer a further prosecution of this point to that place.

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Attende quod non dixerit, *speravi*, aut *spero*, sed *sperabo*. Hoc, inquit, est votum meum, hoc propositum meum, hæc intentio cordis mei.—*Bern. in Ps. Qui habitat*, ser. 2.

Thus in the absolute promises which saints make, they arrogate nothing to themselves above their ability, and yet manifest an unfeigned heart, and unalterable resolution to God-wards. So as where they say I will walk, I will hope, I will do this and that, it is as if they had said, this is my desire, this is my purpose, this is the intention of my heart.

By the means, as true intention, earnest desire, prudent jealousy, and holy zeal are manifested, so is a dull spirit much quickened, and the weak, wayward, revolting flesh bridled and curbed, yea, and bound to her good behaviour.

Sec. 65. *Of man's answering God's merry with duty.*

VII. *Manifestation of God's good pleasure to man must make man careful to please God.*<sup>1</sup> Where God saith, 'I will be their God,' Jer. xxiv. 7; which is an evident manifestation of God's good will to them, this is thereupon inferred, 'they shall be my people;' which, as it noteth a dignity, for it is a prerogative to be God's people, so also a duty; for it is added, 'They shall return unto me with their whole heart.' Yea, in another place where God is brought in to say to them, 'It is my people,' they are brought in to answer, 'The Lord is my God,' Zech. xiii. 9. More plainly, Hezekiah having thus expressed God's good will to him, 'The Lord was ready to save me,' maketh this inference, 'Therefore will we sing,' Isa. xxxviii. 20. And the psalmist yet more directly to the point in hand, saith to the Lord, 'I will praise thy name for thy loving-kindness,' Ps. cxxxviii. 2.

Gratefulness and all equity requireth that they who taste of the sweetness of God's kindness and goodness should so 'walk before God' as to seek in all things to please him.<sup>2</sup> Kindness requireth kindness; goodness, goodness; especially such kindness and goodness as the Lord sheweth and doeth. But all the kindness or goodness that we possibly can shew or do to God is to please him. God's good pleasure is the ground of all our hope,—the spring from whence do flow all the good things

which in any kind we have or can expect. Thereby God manifesteth his mind and respect toward us. Our care to please him is the best evidence that we can give of our good mind and respect to God. We can really give nothing to him; wherefore the more and greater good things we receive from God, the more careful we ought to be to please him.

That this general duty may be the better performed, three or four particulars are duly to be observed.

1. Take due notice of God's good will to thee, and distinctly observe the several evidences that he giveth thereof. Kindness not observed is as no kindness. But when thou canst in truth say of God's goodness, as he did who said, 'That my soul knoweth right well,' Ps. cxxxix. 14, then will thy judgment be convinced of the equity of the duty which thou owest to God, which is a forcible means to bring the will to yield thereunto. For this end learn to make a catalogue of God's mercies, and to set them in order.<sup>1</sup>

2. Inquire what can be done by thee that may be pleasing and acceptable to him. Many are the admonitions of Scripture hereunto, as, 'Understand what the will of the Lord is,' Eph. v. 17; 'Prove what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God,' Rom. xii. 2. This doth the Holy Scripture expressly and distinctly declare. Well acquaint thyself with God's word, and thou mayest be well instructed in God's will.

3. Being thus instructed, stir up thy spirit and whole man to do that which thou knowest ought to be done. 'I exhort you,' saith the apostle, 'by the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us how to walk and to please God,'—thus they were sufficiently instructed,—'so you would abound more and more,' 1 Thes. iv. 1; thus he would have them to stir up themselves to do what they had learned to do.

4. Because 'we are not sufficient to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;' 'It is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure,' 2 Cor. iii. 5; Phil. ii. 13; to thine own endeavour add faithful prayer for God's assistance. We have for this the pattern of an apostle, who, when he had declared a good evi-

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Tanto amplius timere Deum, et magis sollicitus esse debuerat, quanto majora ejus munera percepit.—*Bern. in Ps. Qui habitat*, ser. 1.

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part 2, secs. 63, 64, 69.

dence of God's kindness to the Hebrews,—namely, their redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ,—he prayeth that God would 'work in them that which is well-pleasing in his sight,' Heb. xiii. 21.

If by these and other like means we shall indeed answer God's mercy with doing our duty, and so 'walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,' Col. i. 10, he will never repent him of any kindness shewed to us, but will rather delight in doing more and more goodness.

Sec. 66. *Of the meaning and doctrine of the tenth and eleventh verses.*

Ver. 10. *I believed: therefore have I spoken. I was greatly afflicted.* Ver. 11. *I said in my haste, All men are liars.*

These two verses are a digression from his fore-mentioned profession, which is prosecuted in the verses immediately after these, so as they may not unfitly be included in a parenthesis.

The prophet in penning this psalm was even ravished with a holy admiration of the great deliverance which he had, and that beyond his expectation; hereupon, as men in such cases use to do, he falleth into digressions concerning the greatness of his distress, the weakness of his flesh, yea, and of his recovery of himself after that weakness, which is here noted in the first place; thus, 'I believed,' &c.

Some<sup>1</sup> take this of the prophet's too much credulity in the case betwixt Ziba and Mephibosheth, 2 Sam. xvi. 3, 4, or of his too much credulity to Absalom, Ahithophel, and other flattering courtiers which were the cause of his flying from Absalom. But that sense can be nothing to the prophet's purpose in this place; besides, the word thus set alone, 'I believed,' will not well bear that sense. As the first word of this psalm<sup>2</sup> thus set, 'I love,' so this 'I believed,' hath an especial emphasis. It sheweth that the greatness of his affliction could not quell his faith. St Paul expressly sheweth that the prophet here means by this phrase, 'I believed,' 2 Cor. iv. 13, a steadfast confidence in God; such a confidence as by the Spirit of God is wrought in saints' hearts; therefore some for more perspicuity insert this word 'God,' thus, 'I believed God.' This faith so quickened

<sup>1</sup> Lyranus, Aignanur, Rickelius.

<sup>2</sup> See Sec. 5.

his spirit, and wrought such a holy zeal in his soul, as he could not contain himself nor conceal his mind, but was in a manner forced to express himself and to utter his thoughts, whereupon he maketh this inference, 'Therefore have I spoken.' Some<sup>1</sup> turn it in the future thus, 'I will speak,' and in the Hebrew (אָדַבַּר, *loquar*) it is so, simply considered; but it is usual in that tongue to express things past by the future, especially in rendering a reason of that which is past, as in the first verse of this psalm, כִּי וְשָׁמַעַי.

*Quest.* What, then, was it that his faith made him utter and speak?

*Ans.* All that is mentioned in this psalm. His faith made him call upon God in his deavly distress; his faith made him acknowledge God's grace and mercy; his faith made him promise and vow praise and obedience to God.

This clause, 'I was greatly afflicted,' may have a fit relation either to that which goeth before, or that which followeth.

In the former respect, it is added as an amplification of the great measure of his faith, which, notwithstanding the greatness of his distress, could not be extinguished. If a discrete conjunction, *although*, be prefixed, the emphasis of this clause will appear thus, 'I spake although I was greatly afflicted.'

In the latter respect it is premised as an extenuation of his weakness, shewing that this was a cause thereof, namely, his sore affliction. If this casual particle, because, be prefixed,<sup>2</sup> the force of the reason will be evident, thus, 'Because I was greatly afflicted, I said in my haste,' &c.

I take the former relation to be here especially intended by reason of that note of distinction which is betwixt this clause and the verse following.

Ver. 11. *I said (בְּהַפְזִי) in my haste.*

The word translated haste, (הַפְזִי,) properly signifieth, to fly for fear. It is used to set out the fearful flight and haste of the Assyrians, when they thought that the Hittites and Philistines were suddenly coming upon them, they cast away their garments in their fearful flight, 2 Kings vii. 15,

<sup>1</sup> Vatabl. in annot. ad hunc loc.

<sup>2</sup> *Silut sive Soph pasue est pausa perfectæ sententiæ, quæ usurpari solet in fine versuum.*

(בַּהֲפוֹסִים) Hebrew interpreters do sometimes translate it, 'to make haste,' as in the place quoted, and sometimes to be affrighted, as where it is said, 'At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away,' Ps. civ. 7. (יִהְיוּן) they translate it, 'They shall be terrified.' Whereas, therefore, there seemeth to be a difference betwixt interpreters, some translating this clause thus, 'in my haste;' others<sup>1</sup> thus, 'in my fear;' both interpretations may well stand together and be thus composed, 'in my sudden fear;' or 'in my fearful haste;' so as unadvised, rash, sudden fear was the cause of this conceit and censure, 'all men are liars.'

A difference also there is in the interpretation of this clause; for some expound it as a speech of faith, opposing men to God, who only is true, as if he had more largely thus expressed his mind: The Lord is without all question most true, faithful, and constant in all his promises; and where men oft make question thereof, it is by reason of that vanity and weakness which is in them, for all men are liars. This difference betwixt God and man is most true, expressly noted by the apostle in these words, 'Let God be true, and every man a liar,' Rom. iii. 4. But this interpretation in this place cannot well stand with this clause immediately going before, 'I said in my haste.' For to pronounce all men liars, in opposition to God's truth, is no rash, passionate speech, but a true, advised, apostolical speech.

Others,<sup>2</sup> therefore, expound it as a speech of incredulity, and refer this general particle, all, in special to such messengers of God as were sent to him, to comfort him in his afflictions, and to promise him deliverance and advancement. Now, though at first he might believe them, yet when he was in the extremity of his perplexity, so as he doubted of all recovery, then he made question of the truth of their words, and in his sudden fear said to this purpose: Certainly, as the common sort of men, so even these servants and prophets of God are liars; all men, not these excepted—all men are liars. Now where he layeth the blame on men, therein, notwithstanding

this his great weakness, he testifieth a reverent respect towards God, in that he doth not question the truth of God's word, but rather imagineth that the prophets did not well take their errand, but brought a wrong message; and in that respect chargeth not God but men with falsehood, and saith, All men are liars. In the original the words of this clause are in the singular number, thus: Every man is a liar (כֹּל-הָאָדָם כּוֹזֵב); but the generality in the singular number is of as large an extent as in the plural, and for sense truly and fully thus translated: All men are liars.

In this digression there is a mixture of faith and fear.

The parts are two:

1. The evidence of his faith, ver. 10.

2. The instance of his fear, ver. 11.

The former is propounded—amplified.

In the proposition we have to note:

1. The expression of his faith, I believed.

2. The confirmation thereof, 'Therefore have I spoken.'

The amplification is taken from the extremity of his distress, 'I was greatly afflicted.'

The latter—namely, his fear—is

1. Implied by this phrase, 'In my sudden fear.'

2. Exemplified by this instance, 'I said, all men are liars.'

The expression of his faith hath relation to the time of his trial; for he saith not of the time present wherein he was freed from his troubles, I believe, but of that time which before he described in the second and third verses, whereby he giveth demonstration that—

I. Faith remains firm in troubles.

The confirmation of the truth of his faith by his acknowledging God's mercy, calling upon God, promising to walk before God—which is the speaking here meant—giveth evidence that—

II. Faith makes men freely utter their mind.

The amplification of the truth of his faith by the sore trouble wherein he was, thus set out, 'I was greatly afflicted,' giveth proof that—

III. No affliction can utterly suppress faith. If not great affliction, what affliction?

The implication of his hasty, rash passion under

<sup>1</sup> Vatab. Annot. in 2 King vii. 15, sic exponunt בַּהֲפוֹסִים dum trepidantes fugerunt. Athanas. de Passion. Dom. Gratian. de Penit.

<sup>2</sup> Calvinus Comment in hunc loc. Sic et Lorinus, aliique Commentat.

this phrase, 'in my haste,' or in my sudden fear, giveth instance that—

IV. Saints are subject to sudden passions.

The uttering of his mind in this his passion—for saith he, 'I said in my haste'—further sheweth that—

V. Distempered passion causeth unadvised speech.

The matter of his speech, which is to account such as brought him promises of his deliverance to be liars, implieth that—

VI. Extremity of distress causeth saints to account promises of release to be vain.

The object of his imputation, men, (not God, though those men were sent of God,) men are liars, importeth that—

VII. Saints in their most disturbed passion bear a reverent respect to God.

Yet withal his unjust blaming of men (which he here acknowledgeth to be an effect of his weak flesh and distempered passion) declareth that—

VIII. Man must not unjustly be blamed.

The extent of that object noted by this note of generality, all, intimateth that—

IX. Passion makes men judge all alike.

The connexion of the two parts of this digression, whereof the former is an evidence of his faith, the latter an evidence of his fear, giveth assurance that—

X. Faith and fear may be mixed together.

The first and third of these doctrines are of near affinity. The third compriseth the first in it, as a greater the less. Upon the proof of the third follows the proof of the first. I will therefore put off the first to the third.

Sec. 67. *Of that boldness of speech which faith worketh.*

II. *Faith makes men freely utter their mind.* To shew that this was not proper to this prophet only, but is common to other believers also, the apostle maketh this inference, 'We also believe, and therefore speak,' 2 Cor. iv. 13. Well weigh the ardeny, the instancy, the importunity of the prayers of Abraham, Gen. xviii. 24, &c., Jacob, chap. xxxii. 26, &c., Moses, Exod. xxxii. 11, Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 11, Daniel, chap. ix. 18, 19, and others, and you will find this verified in them, that they also believed, and therefore spake. The like may be noted of the solemn protestations of David, Ps. cxix. 106 ;

and of the Jews in Asa's, 2 Chron. xv. 14, and Nehemiah's time, chap. v. 13 ; and of the congratulations of David, Ps. lvii. 7, &c., 136, 148 ; and of the people in Ezra's time, Neh. viii. 6.

Faith worketh in man assurance of God's gracious acceptance, and so ministereth unto his soul a holy boldness, according to that of the apostle, 'We have boldness and access with confidence by faith,' Eph. iii. 12.

Faith is the first of the mighty works of God's Spirit that are wrought in man ; the mother of all sanctifying graces ; that which addeth power and efficacy to all the rest, and therefore must needs in itself be powerfully operative. It is so spiritually hot as it cannot be smothered, much less extinguished ; like a hot fiery vapour, the more it is suppressed, the more violent it waxeth.<sup>1</sup> Philosophy teacheth that hot vapours by a repulsion of contraries wax violent, whence proceedeth the violence of thunder, of winds, of earthquakes, and such other meteors. And theology teacheth, that the fervent graces of God's Spirit, among which faith is most principal, wax the more spiritually violent by opposition.

1. Trial is hereby made of the truth and measure of faith. If they that believe speak, what may be thought of them that speak not ? Will charity (that 'believeth all things, that hopeth all things,' 1 Cor. xiii. 7) suffer to believe and hope that faith is in him, who hath no heart to pray, no boldness to profess the name of God, no spirit to praise him ? He that is altogether silent, hath assuredly no faith. He that speaketh faintly and coldly, hath but a fainting and cold faith. This is one of those works whereof we ought every one to say, as we are taught by an apostle, 'I will shew thee my faith by my works.'

2. Be persuaded now to give this evidence of thy faith. Speak, man, speak if thou believest, be not tongue-tied, 'Open thy mouth wide,' Ps. lxxxi. 10. God hath promised to fill it. Speak to God secretly in thy closet. Speak of him openly before men. Speak to him and of him in thy family, in assemblies of saints, at all times, in all places. Speak in the poor's cause. Speak in matters of charity and

<sup>1</sup> Per Antipræstasim. Vide Aristot. Meteor., lib. ii. cap. 3 and 9.

justice. In supplication 'pour out thy soul before the Lord,' 1 Sam. i. 15; 'Set all thy desire before him,' Ps. xxxviii. 9. In profession of his name be not ashamed, Ps. cxix. 46; note for this the apostle's inference: 'I am not ashamed,' 2 Tim. i. 12, saith he. Why? 'I know whom I have believed.' If thou beest ashamed of Christ here, he will be 'ashamed of thee when he cometh in the glory of his Father,' Mark viii. 38. In gratulation, 'With a loud voice glorify God,' Luke xvii. 15. Herein the tongue of that man, Ps. lvii. 8, who was a man after God's own heart, was his glory, Acts xiii. 22. Oh that magistrates, subjects, ministers, people, household-governors, parents, neighbours, all of all sorts, would do this! That magistrates who believe would boldly speak in the cause of God and man! Speak boldly for maintaining truth and purity of religion; speak freely in executing good justice and righteous judgment! That subjects would be bold and free in consenting to the holy covenants and wholesome ordinances which their pious and good governors make! That ministers who believe would 'open their mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,' Eph. vi. 19, and pray and give thanks zealously, cheerfully! That people would testify their faith by manifesting a joint consent, and saying, Amen, amen! That parents and householders would 'command their children and household to keep the way of the Lord!' Neh. viii. 6; Gen. xviii. 19. That neighbours would admonish, exhort, and (as just occasion by sin is offered) reprove, and every way edify one another! Had men faith, God's word would be in their heart as a burning fire shut up in their bones: they would be weary with forbearing. Their mouth would be opened, their heart enlarged, Jer. xx. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 11. Much would God's glory be advanced, much good would be done to man, if every one of us in our places could in truth say, 'I believed, therefore have I spoken.' Yea, doubts arising against that which is meet to be uttered would be suppressed. Faith would soon quell them all. He, therefore, gave a good advice that said, when inextricable doubts do trouble thee, let faith be ready to make resolution and to give satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ὅταν σοὶ ἀπορία τις ἐπιπέη, πρόσφερε τοῖς ζήτομένοις ἐτόμημα λάσιν τὴν πίστιν.—Justin Mart. *Evros. Fid.*

Sec. 68. *Of faith's stability in trials.*

I. *Faith remains firm in troubles.*<sup>1</sup>

III. *No affliction can utterly suppress faith.* How firm in the utmost trial was their faith that said, 'Though he slay me yet will I trust in him,' Job xiii. 15; 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none evil,' Ps. xxiii. 4; 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed: we are perplexed, yet not in despair,' &c., 2 Cor. iv. 8, &c.; 'I am persuaded that neither life,' &c., Rom. viii. 38, 39. That these instances may not be thought to be so extraordinary as they should not be exemplary, note the apostle's ample extension thereof: 'We having the same spirit of faith'—he saith not in the singular number, *I*, as speaking of himself alone, but in the plural, *we*, as speaking of many, and that indefinitely, as excluding none—'we also believe and therefore speak.'<sup>2</sup> It is noted of the ancient Christians that many cruel strokes and much affliction long raging could not overcome their impregnable faith.

The true faith of all saints is 'rooted in Christ,' Col. ii. 7, who is able to minister virtue and vigour, and refreshing unto it in the most blustering, blasting, and nipping times that can be: 'If a tree that is planted by the waters, and spreadeth out her roots by the river, shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit,' Jer. xvii. 8; how much more shall they flourish who are 'planted in the house of the Lord,' Ps. xcii. 13, and rooted in Christ, who will be in them 'a well of water springing to everlasting life,' John iv. 14. It is said of hope, the daughter of faith, that 'it entereth within the veil which is above,' Heb. vi. 19. As hope herein is different from other anchors, which are cast downward, so faith from other trees, which grow downwards. Though they therefore that are planted in the most fertile soils, and by the best rivers, may wither, yet will not faith fail, Luke xxii. 32.

Admirable is the benefit of faith. It sheweth itself in all seasons; it serves for all turns. It cheers

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Inexpugnabilem fidem superare non potuit sæviens diu plaga repetita.—Cypri. *Epist.*, lib. ii. ep. 6.

us in prosperity, it revives us in adversity.<sup>1</sup> It ever keepeth us in a golden mean, so as we be not too much puffed up with prosperity, nor too much dejected with adversity. In prosperity, it moveth us to acknowledge the bounty and magnificence of the Lord, 1 Chron. xxix. 11, &c.; in adversity, it maketh us roll our eyes up to God, 2 Chron. xx. 12, and to sustain and comfort ourselves in him, 1 Sam. xxx. 6; yea, when the clouds of crosses hide the brightness of his favour from us, it maketh us wait till those clouds be driven away, Hosea vi. 1, 2.

Among and above other gifts and graces get faith. Having gotten it, keep it. In keeping it, nourish it so as it may increase. All these are implied under this metaphor, 'Take the shield of faith,' Eph. vi. 16; whereof having published a large treatise, it shall be sufficient here to have pointed at them. See more in 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. 2, part 6, sec. 16, &c.

Sec. 69. *Of sudden passion whereunto saints are subject.*

Ver. 11. *I said in my sudden fear, All men are liars.*

IV. *Saints are subject to sudden passions.*<sup>2</sup> So much in another place acknowledgeth the psalmist of himself: thus, 'I said in my haste, I am cut off,' &c., Ps. xxxi. 22. The very same word is here and there used, **בְּהֵפֶז**. It was a sudden and distempered passion that Moses and Aaron manifested at the water of Meribah, Num. xx. 10; and David at Nabal's churlish answer, 1 Sam. xxv. 22; and Jonah at God's mercy shewed to Nineveh, Jon. iv. 10; and James and John at the Samaritans' refusing to receive Christ, Luke ix. 54; and Paul and Barnabas about receiving John Mark, Acts xv. 39.

The flesh remaineth in such as have the Spirit in them.<sup>3</sup> By virtue of the Spirit's abode in them they are saints, true saints: but by reason of the mixture of the flesh, they are subject to symptoms, effects, and infirmities of the flesh, among which sudden passions may well be reckoned. For passions are like to lusty, pampered horses, which, if they be not held

in with the bridle of reason and curb of discretion, will run with a career to their own and rider's hazard.

May it not now be thought a most unjust censure, to censure all those to be carnal and unregenerate who speak in haste, who betray sudden passions of anger, of grief, of fear, of joy, or of any the like? Saints having been proved to be subject to sudden passion, to censure them for men unregenerate who on a sudden are in passion, what is it but to call good evil, and to make light darkness and sweet bitter? Isa. v. 20. Surely these kind of censures arise from sudden passions. If these, then, be infallible signs of an unregenerate estate, such censures are a demonstration that the authors of them are not regenerate. Yea, demonstrations enough may be made against every one that beareth the name of a saint, that he only beareth the name of a saint, but is no saint. Thus shall all be brought into the labyrinth of despair, out of which they cannot know how to wind themselves. But learn to distinguish betwixt infirmities and obstinacy, and notwithstanding the infirmities that in this world thou art subject unto, thou mayest cheerfully go on in that course which will bring thee to that condition wherein 'the spirits of just men made perfect' are, Heb. xii. 23.

Yet take heed of nourishing and cherishing, of bolstering up and justifying passion; but rather do what in thee lieth to suppress and keep them down. For though, so long as we abide in the tabernacle of this body, and are compassed about with frail flesh, we cannot clean cut off all afflictions and passions, yet we may moderate and rule them, which, if we do not, passions will soon wax violent and grow unto excess, if with prudence and diligence they be not kept under.<sup>1</sup> They are like weeds, which grow apace if they be suffered. They are like beasts and birds, that being naturally wild, if they be not narrowly watched, kept in dark, kept awake, kept from light and sleep, and taught to obey, will ever be wild, never tame. Experience of all ages hath verified this adage. (whereof before,)<sup>2</sup> 'Passions are bad masters but good servants.' If they rule over

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. 2, part 6, sec. 69, 70.

<sup>2</sup> See 65.

<sup>3</sup> Sancti cum mente sint spirituales, adhuc tamen isto corruptibili corpore quod aggravat animam recte intelliguntur esse caruales.—*Aug. cont. Jul. Pelag.* lib. vi. cap. 11.

<sup>1</sup> Nos affectus et perturbatoines, quandiu in tabernaculo corporis hujus habitamus, et fragili carne circumdamur, moderari et regere possumus, amputare non possumus.—*Hier. ad Demetr. de Virg. serv.*

<sup>2</sup> See 4.



reason they will be as lords of misrule, outrageous disturbers of all order. It will be in man's little polity, consisting of body and soul, as it was in Israel when there was no king in Israel, 'Every man did that which was right in his own eyes,' Judges xxi. 25; whence it came to pass that some tribes in Israel were little better than Sodom. There is more need of means to weaken than to strengthen passions, to famish than to cherish them, to curb them in than to spur them out, and to hold them back than to give them head. Though they be in such as are justified and sanctified, yet may they not by any means be justified or countenanced as things lawful. To justify a sudden distempered passion, is 'to call evil good, to put darkness for light, and bitter for sweet,' Isa. v. 20, against which a woe is denounced. To countenance them is to make them violent and irresistible in their rebellion, as Absalom and Adonijah were. 2 Sam. xv. 10; 1 Kings i. 5. Thus an infirmity is turned into obstinacy. As therefore men are watchful over powder in their houses to keep fire from it, both because it soon takes fire, and also being once set on fire it is suddenly all on flame, and by that means very violent and pernicious; so on those very grounds we have need to be as watchful over passions, and to keep them from all occasions that may stir them up; for they are soon stirred, and being stirred wax vehement and violent. Yet I will not deny but that passions may have their use and commodity if there be a very watchful heed had over them.<sup>1</sup> But for instance of their violence, if not well watched, note the next collection.

Sec. 70. *Of unadvised speech arising from distempered passion.*

V. *Distempered passion causeth unadvised speech.*<sup>2</sup>

Instance the speeches recorded in Scripture to come from the distempered passion of those who were mentioned in the former section. As from Moses and Aaron, Num. xx. 10; David, 1 Sam. xxv. 22; Jonah, chap. iv. 1; James and John, Luke ix. 54; and others. Of him that was 'provoked in spirit,' it is said that 'he spake unadvisedly with his lips,' Ps. cvi. 33.

<sup>1</sup> Passiones habent utilitatem suam, si per eas considerantis pervigil currat intentio.—*Chrys.*, hom. 2, in Heb. i.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 66.

'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,' Mat. xii. 34. For the tongue is a most ready interpreter of a man's inward temper. The mouth is the door of the soul. If the fire of passion be once kindled therein, the flame thereof will soon break out at the mouth.

The consideration hereof addeth weight to the admonition given in the former section for watching over our passions, in that the evil arising from thence is not only inward, such as may be kept close within the bowels and breast of a man, but also outward, such as will break forth in words especially, to the offence of others, and to the greater disgrace of our profession and dishonour of God. Words that proceed out of passion are oft violent, and cause much mischief. Many think they extenuate the matter when they say, 'Words are but wind.' Let the violence of wind in a man's head, stomach, belly, veins, guts, or other parts of his body, yea, and in the open air on sea and land, be considered, and it will be found that enough is said of words when they are said to be wind. St James, chap. iii. 3, &c. in regard of the violence of the tongue, resembleth it to other very strong and forcible things—as to the bit of a bridle, whereby the rider maketh a lusty horse to turn this way and that way, as he list; to the helm of a ship, wherewith a pilot turneth a huge vessel on the sea whithersoever he will; to a fire, which kindleth a great matter.<sup>1</sup> Yea, it is like a burning furnace, which is most violent. And the apostle addeth, that 'it setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell.' Yea, he maketh it more fierce than the wild beasts: 'For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.' What orator could more lively have set out the violence of so little a member than the apostle hath done? No marvel now that where a man hath two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two arms, two hands, and many other members double, he hath but one tongue, one being enough, if not too much, to rule, and that the fabric of that one tongue is so ordered by nature, or rather by the God of nature, as it is—that it should

<sup>1</sup> Quotidiana fornax nostra est humana lingua.—*Aug. Confess.*, lib. x. cap. 37.

be placed in the highest part of the body, the head, as in a castle on a hill, and be there bound with the roots of it as with strong bars, and kept within the two-leaved gate of the lips, and the portullis of the teeth—notwithstanding all which, straight charge is given to him ‘that desireth life, and loveth many days that he may see good, to keep his tongue,’ Ps. xxxiv. 12, 13; for, ‘death and life are in the power of the tongue,’ Prov. xviii. 21. And ‘whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles,’ Prov. xxi. 23; and the psalmist, well knowing that he of himself was not able to rule that unruly evil, thus prayeth to God, ‘Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips,’ Ps. cxli. 3. Seeing passion openeth up the gate, pulleth up the portullis, and maketh a passage for this wild beast, and not only so, but stirreth up the rage of it, and sharpeneth the deadly point of it, surely this one effect is motive sufficient to make men do what possibly they can to moderate passion. For the tongue is as slippery as an eel: it being placed in moisture, it must needs soon slip.<sup>1</sup>

Hereby take notice of the corruption of man in soul and body. As the eyes and ears are windows to let in corruption into the soul, so the mouth is a door to let it out, whereby it comes to be the more infectious, to the damage of others; for evil words corrupt good manners in ourselves and others. Thus the tongue, that is the pen of a ready writer in one, is a sword in another, not in its own nature, but by the different use of it;<sup>2</sup> for the nature of this and that man’s tongue is the same, but the use is not the same, which should make us the more watchful over our tongue.

Sec. 71. *Of saints questioning God’s promises in distress.*

VI. *Extremity of distress maketh saints account promises of release to be vain.*<sup>3</sup> Which that worthy saint did, who said in his heart, ‘I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul,’ 1 Sam. xxvii. 1; and again, speaking to God, ‘I am cut off from before thine eyes,’ Ps. xxxi. 22. After that God had promised

to Abraham that he would ‘make of him a great nation,’ Gen. xii. 2, and ‘make his seed as the dust of the earth,’ chap. xiii. 16, he and his wife being both old, he thus said, ‘Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?’ chap. xv. 2. Did not this speech shew that he accounted God’s promise to be vain? Yea, and this speech also of Moses, ‘I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand,’ Num. xi. 14, 15; and this, ‘Shall the flock and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together to suffice them?’ ver. 22. Did not Christ’s disciples, and others that believed in him, account the promises of his resurrection to be vain? Luke xxiv. 14, 25. Too evident fruits of the great weakness of those worthy saints were these; for not to be steadfast in faith is a great weakness.<sup>1</sup>

Afflictions do oft so stir the corrupt humour of the flesh which is in every saint, as it sendeth up such abundance of vapours of infidelity, as they cause a great mist to spread itself before the eyes of men’s understanding, so as they cannot clearly see the light of God’s promises, whereby they are brought to make question of the truth thereof, even as children and fools do think there is no light in the sun when a thick cloud hath overspread the face of the sky, and hindereth the beams of the sun from shining on the earth. The best many times, through the violence of temptations, in the things of God shew themselves as children and fools.

Let us all learn by such patterns of the weakness of the flesh, even in the best, to suspect ourselves, and to ‘fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us seem to come short of it,’ Heb. iv. 1. Before the time of trial come, let us pray, as Christ did for Peter, ‘that our faith fail not,’ Luke xxii. 32; and according to the promise made to Paul, that God’s ‘grace may be sufficient for us,’ 2 Cor. xii. 9; and that the Lord would ‘not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able,’ 1 Cor. x. 13. Above all, take we heed of presumptuous self-conceit, that we be not like him who, in too much confidence of his own strength, said to

<sup>1</sup> *Lingua non frustra in udo est, nisi quia facile labitur.—Aug. Euar. in Ps. lxxxiii.*

<sup>2</sup> *Illa quidem gladius, calamus, at hæc erat non secundum propriam naturam, sed secundum intentionem electionem. Lingue enim natura et hujus et illius una erat, operatio autem non una.—Chrys. ad Pop., hom. 4.*

<sup>3</sup> Sec. 66.

<sup>1</sup> *Dicitur infirmitas, non esse solidatum in fide, simpliciter neque perfectum esse.—Chrys., hom. 28, in 2 Cor. xiii.*

Christ, 'Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended,' Mat. xxvi. 33; and again, 'Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee,' ver. 35. A worthy profession and resolution this was, if it had not been uttered upon too great a confidence of his own ability to stand and withstand all temptations. But it being uttered on presumption of his own strength, the issue thereof was most woeful. Nothing more provokes God to leave men to themselves, and to suffer Satan to prevail against them, than a high conceit of themselves. It is most meet that such should know their own weakness. But nothing can give to man a more evident demonstration of his frailty and weakness than his slips and falls when he is brought to the trial. This will make him say, 'Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee?' Job xl. 4; 'I abhor myself, I repent in dust and ashes,' chap. xlii. 6.

Sec. 72. *Of saints' reverent esteem of God in their greatest straits.*

VII. *Saints in their disturbed passion bear a reverent respect to God.*<sup>1</sup> So did they who said to God, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee,' &c., Jer. xii. 1; 'I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further,' Job xl. 5. And he who said of God, 'How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out,' Rom. xi. 33; and thereupon made this inference, 'O man, who art thou that repliest against God?' chap. ix. 20. Though the apostle were not disturbed in his passion when he uttered these speeches, yet the occasion which made him utter them was such as did amaze many; but his respect to God made him admire and adore that which others excepted against.

1. There are certain principles against which men of understanding will not oppose or dispute; no, nor search after the reason of them.<sup>2</sup> Among and above all other principles those which concern the infiniteness and perfection of God's essence, properties, word, and works are most infallible and undeniable. Saints, therefore, who have a true and

right understanding of God dare not impeach God's truth, justice, wisdom, power, mercy, or anything else in God, though the works of God and God's dealing with them do seem very strange unto them. Knowledge of God's perfection works such reverence in them towards God as they had rather remain as in a maze, not knowing what to say, than impute any blame to God. If they lay any blame it shall be rather on man than on God.

2. The Spirit never wholly leaveth the saints. Though the weakness of the flesh be very great, yet will the Spirit keep them from falling from their God. 'The spirit is ready when the flesh is weak,' Mat. xxvi. 41; yea, 'the spirit lusteth against the flesh,' Gal. v. 17, and restraineth it from fulfilling the lusts thereof. So as when the flesh would rise against God, the spirit keepeth it down.

Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded. Let us testify our high esteem of the Lord, our reverent respect towards him, by not daring to entertain a thought, or to suffer a word to slip out of our mouth which may any way be derogatory to any of his excellencies; or to think anything of him otherwise than indeed he is;<sup>1</sup> 'Wilt thou condemn him that is most just? Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? or to princes, Ye are ungodly? How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor?' Job xxxiv. 17, &c. To admire and adore the unsearchable ways of the Almighty may well beseem sons of men. But to think a thought or to utter a word that may lay any blame upon them is sensual and diabolical.

To have thine heart well seasoned with a due respect of God, be well informed in his excellencies, and oft meditate thereon. Ignorance of God is it that causeth many base and unmeet thoughts of him to enter into our hearts. Want of meditation maketh what we know not to be remembered, or not to be regarded. Add therefore to the means of information which God affordeth, serious and settled meditation. Thus thy mind being filled with divine thoughts, will not suffer impious and blasphemous thoughts to harbour there.

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἐπισημοῦσι καὶ ἀρχαῖς ἐπισήμωται τὸ διὰ τλ.—Arist. Analyt., lib. i. cap. 1.*

<sup>1</sup> *Quisquis Deum cogitat pie caveat quantum potest aliquid de Deo sentire quod non sit.—Aug. de Trin., lib. v. cap. 1.*

Sec. 73. *Of blaming men unjustly.*

VIII. *Men must not unjustly be blamed.*<sup>1</sup> God made an express law against it, and said, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour,' Exod. xx. 16. Many like prohibitions are in the word, chap. xxiii. 1; Prov. xxiv. 28; Mat. vii. 1; Titus iii. 2. Though the wrong be done to man, yet the fact is abominable to God, Prov. vi. 16, 19, who to restrain men from it, hath enacted severe laws against such as transgress therein, Deut. xix. 19. Yea, they are accounted unworthy to dwell in God's holy hill, Ps. xv. 3.

The wrong which by unjust accusing and blaming of men is done, is one of the greatest wrongs that can be done against man; because thereby, that which of all other things is the most precious to man, his good name, is impeached. In which respect this sin, though it be a direct wrong against man, is styled blasphemy, Eph. iv. 31; Col. iii. 8; and they who speak evil of men unjustly, are said to 'blaspheme them,' Titus iii. 2; 1 Pet. iv. 4; 2 Pet. ii. 10, which is, according to the notation of the Greek word, to 'hurt a man's fame,' *βλασφημεῖν τὴν φήμην βλάπτειν, famein ledere*; or otherwise, to 'assault one with tales,' *βαλάνειν τοῖς φήμασι, impetere rumoribus*; to gall and vex him with rumours and reports. Not without cause therefore hath the Holy Ghost resembled the tongues of such men to 'the tongue of a serpent,' Ps. cxl. 3, which is very poisonous; to 'a razor,' Ps. lii. 2, which is very sharp; and to 'a sharp sword,' Ps. lvii. 4, that pierceth deep; their teeth to 'spears and arrows,' which are mortal instruments; their throats to an 'open sepulchre,' Ps. v. 9, that devoureth much; and their words to 'the poison of adders,' Ps. cxl. 3, which is a most venomous and pestilent poison.

How watchful now ought we to be over our tongues, whereby so great wrong may be done to man! The tongue stands in a most slippery place; words are out of the mouth many times before a man is aware of them; the more watchful therefore we ought to be. With the tongue 'we bless God,' James iii. 9. Shall we therewith 'blaspheme men, who are made after the similitude of God? Shall there proceed out of the same mouth blessing and

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 66.

cursing? My brethren, these things ought not to be so.' As we make conscience of dishonouring God by impious and profane speeches directly uttered against his divine Majesty, so let us take heed of collateral blasphemy against such as bear his image. He that said, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,' said also, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.' Now if thou blaspheme not the name of God, yet if thou belie thy brother, 'thou art become a transgressor of the law.' Let, therefore, that reverent respect which thou bearest to the name of God work in thee a due respect to the name of man, that thou do no wrong thereto.

Sec. 74. *Of censuring all alike.*

IX. *Passion makes men judge all alike.*<sup>1</sup> True it is that by reason of that natural corruption which hath infected all mankind, all are alike. 'There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,' Rom. iii. 22, 23. Thus a prophet, and an apostle also, Ps. xiv. 3; Rom. iii. 10, not in passion, but by immediate instinct of the Spirit, said, 'There is none righteous, no not one.' Yea, in this sense the apostle useth the very words that are here used, 'Every man is a liar,' chap. iii. 4, and yet no man unjustly blamed. But to judge such as have the Spirit of God in them, and are in what they speak guided by the Spirit of God, yea, and bring their message from God, to judge them to be as natural unregenerate men are, 'liars,' this is a most unjust imputation. Yet thus did passion make this prophet judge the prophets of the Lord that came to him in the name of the Lord, with the word of the Lord, to be. Both passion and hardness of heart made Pharaoh, Exod. vii. 11, judge Moses and Aaron to be like to the sorcerers and magicians of Egypt. So did Sennacherib, 2 Kings xix. 11, judge Hezekiah and his people and kingdom to be no better than the kings, people, and kingdoms of other nations. It is oft noted of the Jews—Jer. v. 31; Lam. ii. 14; Zech. xiii. 4; Micah iii. 5—that they gave no more heed to such faithful prophets as the Lord sent than to such false prophets as ran of themselves, and were not sent; who spake a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 66.

Lord. Yea, many times more credit was given to such false prophets than to true ones, 1 Kings xxii. 8; Jer. xviii. 18, xxxvii. 19.

Passion in the soul is as colour in glass. Now by experience we know that what a man looketh upon through coloured glass appears to him to be of the same colour that the glass is of, though it be in truth of another colour. All objects are presented through such a glass in one and the same colour. So to a man in passion all men seem alike—all liars, all deceitful, all unjust, all unmerciful, all as one. Hence these or such like speeches oft come from them, I will believe no man; I will trust no man; no man will deal faithfully with me; none can do me any good.

It is on this ground very requisite that men in passion, or overwhelmed with affliction, learn to suspect themselves, and to suppose that they may be deceived. We use thus to persuade men that by sickness are distempered in their taste, and cannot discern any difference betwixt meats, but loathe all alike, to believe others that have both good understanding of what is wholesome and hurtful, and also a taste well tempered, and accordingly against their own distempered humour to take and eat that which those others do offer unto them for their good. Many that in passion have had a very ill opinion of their best friends, and been moved to inveigh against them most bitterly, when the passion hath been over have been very sorry for that wrong they did, and much repented the same. If such would have suspected themselves they might have prevented that occasion of after-repentance. It is a kind of madness not to think and know that lies cannot long deceive, and that it is night while<sup>1</sup> the day shineth out.<sup>2</sup> Knowledge of truth doth as evidently discover a lie as the sun dispels darkness.

If such general censures proceeding from men in passion be blameworthy, (for here the prophet acknowledged it so to be,) what are they when they come from men in cold blood, (as we speak,) when there is no affliction to vex and grieve them, no occasion to anger them, no great cause to stir up any passion in them, except a malevolent humour in

themselves? Too too frequent are such censures, and that most commonly when such as by function, profession, or any other like relation, have dependence on God. Thus if some ministers be observed to be proud, covetous, licentious, or otherwise vicious, a general imputation shall be laid upon all: All ministers are thus and thus; so, on like grounds, all professors are hypocrites, all frequenters of sermons are busybodies, all that make conscience of swearing are liars, &c. Thus in other cases, All tradesmen are cozeners, all citizens are usurers, all physicians are hard-hearted, all lawyers are unconscionable, all officers are bribers, all patrons are simoniacal, all courtiers are proud, all scholars are vainglorious, all husbands are slaves, all wives will be masters, all servants are idle. Yea, it is usual thus to impeach all of a nation; as, All Spaniards are proud, all Italians are Machiavellians, all Frenchmen are false-hearted, all Dutchmen are drunkards, all Scotchmen are treacherous, all Englishmen are fantastical. Such general censures cannot be but unjust censures, and yet too too frequent they are.

Sec. 75. *Of the mixture of faith and fear.*

X. *Faith and fear may be mixed together.*<sup>1</sup> After Abraham had so believed as 'his faith was counted to him for righteousness,' Gen. xv. 6; he said, 'They will slay me for my wife's sake,' Gen. xx. 11, which argued much fear. Of faithful Jacob it is said, 'He was greatly afraid,' Gen. xxxii. 7. He that said, 'I will call upon the Lord and he shall save me,' Ps. lv. 5, 16, an undoubted evidence of faith, said also in the very same psalm, 'Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me,' an apparent sign of fear. Oft doth Christ upbraid fear even to his believing disciples, Mat. viii. 26, xiv. 31; Luke xxiv. 37. Of Peter it is noted, after that he was endued with an extraordinary measure of faith and other gifts, that he feared them which were of the circumcision, Gal. ii. 12.

That which the apostle saith of knowledge, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, is true of faith, and of all other graces for the time of this life, 'We believe in part.' So much as wanteth in man of the perfection of faith, fear filleth up; as air filleth up so much of a vessel as

<sup>1</sup> That is, 'until'—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Hæc est vere dementia, non cogitare, nec scire quod inenunciabilia non diu fallant; noctemque tandem esse, quamdiu illuceseat dies.—*Cypri. Epist.*, lib. i. ep. 3.

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 66.

wanteth water or other liquor. Fear to the soul of man is as Amalek to Israel: and faith as Moses, Exod. xvii. 8, &c. Fear is ready on all-occasions to invade the soul. If faith wax faint, and let down her hand, fear prevails. Yea, as the two houses of David and Saul were together in Israel, 2 Sam. iii. 1, and maintained war one against the other, so do fear and faith in the same souls. But as faith waxeth stronger and stronger, fear will wax weaker and weaker.

This mixture putteth us in mind of sundry duties, as,—

1. To bear with the infirmities of saints, Gal. vi. 1.
2. To be watchful over ourselves, Mat. xxvi. 41.
3. To beware of presumption, Mat. xxvi. 35.
4. To take heed of grieving the Spirit, Eph. iv. 30.
5. To pray for increase of faith, Luke xvii. 5.
6. To stir up the gift of God in us, 2 Tim. i. 6.
7. To check ourselves for doubting, Ps. xlii. 5.

Much comfort may hence arise to such as mislike this fruit of the weakness of the flesh in them, and thereupon use what means they can and do their endeavour to cast off this fear. If notwithstanding their grief for it, and strife against it, they find themselves still subject thereto, let them not thereupon question the truth of their faith because of that fear which appears to be in them. Their case in this case is no other than hath been evidenced to be the case of many of God's ancient worthies. Such fear coming not from malice, nor from pride, or contempt of any charge given unto them by the Lord, but from the infirmity of the flesh, God would not impute it to his people.<sup>1</sup>

Sec. 76. *Of the interpretation and resolution of the twelfth verse.*

Ver. 12. *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?*

Here the prophet returneth to his protestation: which being generally manifested, ver. 9, 'I will walk, &c., is here more particularly expressed.

This is set out, 2.—

<sup>1</sup> Timorem non de malitia, neque de superbia, vel contemptu precepti dominici, sed de animi infirmitate venientem noluit Dominus imputare.—*Aug. Quest. sub. Jo. l. vi. cap. ult.*

<sup>2</sup> See, 2.

1. By way of profession in relation to himself, 'I will,' &c.

2. By way of provocation in relation to others, ver. 19, 'praise ye,' &c.

His profession is propounded, repeated.

In his first propounding of it we may note,—

1. The manner, ver. 12.

2. The matter, ver. 13.

3. The motives, ver. 14–16.

The manner of expressing his profession is very elegant by a rhetorical addubitation, (*ἀπολογία*) wherein he reasoneth with himself about the duty to be performed.

Of this addubitation and kind of reasoning there be two parts,—

1. A question, ver. 12.

2. An answer, ver. 13, which declareth the matter.

As the English word, *render*, so the Hebrew **שׁוּב** importeth a kind of requital. It is attributed to God and man, and that in relation to a good thing done, and signifieth to *reward*; or to an evil, and signifieth to *revenge*.

Where David saith of God, 'According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me,' Ps. xviii. 20, he useth this word, **יָשׁוּב**; and where he prayeth to God for vengeance on the wicked, thus, 'Render to them their desert,' Ps. xxviii. 4, **הַשִּׁב**. This word is also used where the brethren of Joseph say of him, 'He will certainly requite us all the evil which we have done unto him,' Gen. l. 15;<sup>1</sup> and where the king of Israel giveth this charge for the Shunammite, 'Restore all that was hers,' 2 Kings viii. 6, **הַשִּׁב**. Here it is attributed to man in relation to God, but not as importing any possibility of satisfaction, but only a forwardness to do anything that might be acceptable to God.

The word translated *benefits*, **תַּנְנוּלוֹ**, is derived of that verb which, in the 7th verse, is translated *dealt bountifully*, **נָבַל**. These in relation to God he styeth His, *his benefits*, to testify his acknowledgment of the good things which he had received to come from God, and to be given by him.

He addeth that general particle ALL, to shew that, from that present benefit which God had conferred upon him, his heart was extended unto a considera-

<sup>1</sup> **יָשׁוּב הַשִּׁב** reddendo reddet.

tion of other favours which the Lord from time to time had done him.

The word translated *towards me*, עָלַי, properly signifieth *over* or *above me*: for it cometh from a verb that signifieth to *ascend*; and to express the emphasis thereof some thus translate it, *All thy benefits go over me*.<sup>1</sup> But the preposition doth oft signify, as our English translateth it, *towards me*; and it may very fitly be so taken in this place.

The former part of the verse, set out interrogatively by way of question, 'What shall I render to the Lord?' manifesteth both an earnest desire to be truly and thoroughly informed of whatsoever may be acceptable and pleasing to the Lord, and also a settled resolution indeed to perform whatsoever he shall be informed of concerning that point.

The latter part, 'All his benefits are towards me,' are added as a reason of his resolution. The first particle, *for*, is not in the original. It maketh the sense somewhat doubtful. Some set it down as a preposition, without any stop betwixt the former and this part, making but one entire clause of all, and setting the interrogative point in the end of all, thus, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?'<sup>2</sup> Others make two distinct sentences, and place the interrogative in the end of the first clause, thus, 'What shall I render to the Lord? all his benefits are towards me.'<sup>3</sup> The king's translators set a colon betwixt the two parts, which doth so distinguish them as two sentences: this difference is not great. Howsoever the sentences be pointed, it is evident that the latter is added as a reason of the former. He was inquisitive what to render to God, because God had been beneficial to him.

Behold here a grateful disposition, which is manifested,

By his inquisition, profession.

In the former there is considerable

1. The subject, or matter inquired after, 'What shall I render?'

2. The object, or person concerning whom the inquiry is made, 'The Lord.'

The latter manifesteth the just occasion of the former, 'his benefits;' which are set out.

1. By an amplification, 'all;'

2. By an application, 'towards me.'

These several branches note out sundry properties of a grateful mind.

The inquisition, 'What shall I?' &c., sheweth that—

I. Gratefulness makes men inquisitive.

The thing inquired after being indefinitely set down, ('What?') implieth that—

II. A grateful mind is ready to do anything.

The person (the Lord) for whose sake this inquiry is made declareth that—

III. True gratefulness hath especial relation to the Lord.

The reason hereof being his benefits, 'giveth evidence that—

IV. A right understanding of God's benefits worketh gratefulness.

The ample mention of God's benefits in this general particle, 'all,' manifesteth that—

V. Gratefulness raiseth the mind from some favours to all.

The application of these benefits to himself in this phrase, 'towards me,' giveth proof that—

VI. Sense of God's kindness to one's self doth most enlarge the heart to thankfulness.

The prophet's profession of God's benefits, thus: 'All his benefits are towards me,' demonstrateth that—

VII. Gratefulness works acknowledgment of kindness.

Sec. 77. *Of the property of gratefulness to make men inquisitive.*

I. *Gratefulness makes men inquisitive.*<sup>1</sup> All manner of gratefulness, whether to God or man, hath this property. When David thought on Jonathan's kindness to him, though Jonathan were dead, yet he inquireth whether 'any were left of the house of Saul, that he might shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake,' 2 Sam. ix. 1. And when he considered how God had established peace to his people, first he inquireth and consulteth about bringing the ark to the tabernacle, 1 Chron. xiii. 2, and then adviseth about building a temple for the Lord, chap. xvii. 1. Hypocrites had learned this of the upright, and therefore they from teeth outward are inquisitive, and say,

<sup>1</sup> עָלַי Omnia beneficio tua superant me.—Trem. et Jun.

<sup>2</sup> Genev. interpr.

<sup>3</sup> Trem. et Jun.

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 76.

'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?' &c., Micah vi. 6, &c.

In grateful persons there is a good and high esteem of the kindness that is shewed to them. With this esteem the heart is affected. True affection of the heart is of a hot temper. It can no more be suppressed and kept within the heart than a hot vapour, which, the more it is suppressed the more violent it waxeth, till it have got vent. Such an affection, therefore, will shew itself. And that it may manifest itself in the best manner, to the best content of him to whom they intend their thankfulness, they content not themselves with that which may first rise in their mind, or offer itself to their thought, but diligently inquire what may give best content and what may be most acceptable;<sup>1</sup> which they are the rather moved to do because they can do or give nothing worthy of God and his kindness to them.

By this outward evidence may men give evidence of their inward disposition, and make others see how they are affected with the kindnesses that are done to them. They who care not to know what may be acceptable to such as do good to them have assuredly an ungrateful heart. How can it be thought that they would do the things that please, when they care not to know what may please? By this may grateful subjects, people, children, servants, friends, and neighbours be known; yea, by this may grateful subjects, people, children, and servants of the great Lord of heaven and earth be known, if, at least, their inquiring after that which may be acceptable to God come from an upright and honest heart, and from a full and faithful purpose to perform what they shall be rightly informed in, and indeed to render what they shall learn to be acceptable to the Lord.

They who are so minded have an excellent help to be well informed. That help is God's word, which distinctly and sufficiently revealeth what is the 'good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.' Let all such, therefore, as are entirely provoked to inquire after that which may be pleasing to God by the Holy Scriptures, 'prove,' Rom. xii. 2. and 'understand,' Eph. v. 17, the same. 'Search the Scriptures,'

<sup>1</sup> Dabo quidem quicquid in me primum est; sed nihil dignum dare potero.—Jerome, *Comment. in Mich. vi.*

saith our Lord Christ, 'for they are they which testify of me,' John v. 39. They testify of him what he is. They testify of him what he accepteth, what he approveth, in what and by what he accounteth himself honoured, and sufficiently recompensed for the kindness he sheweth.

Sec. 78. *Of a second property of gratefulness to do anything.*

II. *A grateful mind is ready to do anything.*<sup>1</sup> The prophet doth not here determine any set and particular things which he would be willing to render, but without limitation or exception of anything, saith indefinitely, 'What, what shall I render?' When Ahasuerus had heard out of the Chronicles what a great good turn Mordecai had done him, in revealing a dangerous treason plotted against his life, in true desire of thankful requital he saith, 'What shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour?' Esth. vi. 6. He prescribeth not any particular thing, but inquireth wherein he may make the best requital; and it appeareth that he did make that inquiry with a true intent to do anything; for though Haman through his ambition (supposing that the honour should have been done to himself) advised the king to do more than was meet to be done to a subject, yet the king commanded all to be done to Mordecai. Though David was not permitted to build a temple for the Lord, yet such was his desire to testify his grateful mind to God, as he prepared what he could, even with all his might, for the building thereof, 1 Chron. xxix. 2. Zaccheus was so ravished with that favour and honour that Christ did him in coming to his house, as in way of gratefulness he giveth half of his goods to the poor, Luke xix. 8, and promiseth to restore fourfold to all whom he had wronged.

Gratefulness so enamoureth the soul of a man, as it makes him think that he can never do enough, and therefore he is ready to do anything that he may and can do. It will not suffer a man to hold anything too dear for him on whom his thankful mind is set,—especially when such a mind is set on God, who every way infinitely surpasseth us; who is so absolutely perfect in himself, as he needeth nothing that we have or can do, nor can receive

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 76.



anything but that which is his own, yet daily ladeth with all manner of blessings us who are less than any of his mercies, most unworthy of the least. Who, then, would not willingly and gladly have what he might render to the Lord his God?<sup>1</sup>

Behold here the most ready way that possibly can be prescribed to bring men to endeavour with the utmost of their power in all things to please the Lord. Work in them such an apprehension, a sense of God's kindness to them, as their hearts may be stirred up to thankfulness. Then nor hope of reward, nor fear of revenge, can so incite or quicken them up to any duty, as their own grateful disposition. An ingenious and generous mind (as every grateful mind is) will do much more in thankfulness for a kindness done, than in expectation of a kindness to come. Persuade men, therefore, of the goodness and kindness that God hath done for them, as you desire that they should be willing, ready, and forward to do any duty to God.

Sec. 79. *Of a third property of right thanksgiving, to render it to God.*

III. *True gratefulness hath especial relation to the Lord.*<sup>2</sup> A man that is well instructed in the right form and due manner of thanksgiving will especially return all thanks to God, whether it be for such benefits as come immediately from himself, as all those extraordinary benefits, whereof any that took due notice might say, 'This is the finger of God,' or, 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes;'—(for such as these, Moses and the men of Israel, Exod. xv. 1. Miriam, ver. 20, and the women of Israel gave solemn thanks to God.)—or those ordinary benefits, to the conferring whereof man addeth no help, as the shining of the sun, the courses of the moon, the former and latter rain, the bounds set to the sea, the sweet springs and rivers of water passing through the earth, and many other such as are reckoned up in Ps. civ., for which praise is there given to God, or for such benefits as are conferred upon us by the ministry of man. Thus Melchizedek, Gen. xiv. 20, blessed God for that victory which

Abraham had gotten over his enemies; David, 1 Sam. xxv. 32; 1 Chron. xxix. 13, blessed God for that counsel which wise Abigail gave him; and for those bountiful gifts which he, his princes and people, contributed towards the house of God; and the saints, 2 Cor. ix. 13, gave thanks to God for the liberality of the Christians at Macedonia. So clear is the point of returning thanks to God for all manner of benefits, as besides the many simple forms of giving thanks to God set down throughout the whole Scripture, but especially in the book of Psalms, when man cometh in any competition with God about this matter, he is utterly excluded, as where the psalmist,<sup>1</sup> negatively of man, but affirmatively of God, saith, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.' If ye well observe the precepts of Scripture for performing this duty of thanksgiving, ye shall find this object, the Lord, either plainly expressed, or necessarily understood. How frequent are these phrases, 'Praise the Lord; give thanks to God.' Yea, to demonstrate that God is the proper object of praise, these words, 'Praise ye the Lord,' הללו יהוה, are so compounded together, as they make but one word in Hebrew, which is this Hallelujah.

All manner of benefits do originally come from God.<sup>2</sup> If we receive any mediately by the ministry of man, or of any other creature, they are therein the instruments and hands of God, whereby he reacheth out unto us, and conferreth upon us his benefits. The benefits which we receive from a wise king, just magistrates, faithful ministers, conscientious lawyers, skilful physicians, honest tradesmen, industrious husbandmen, or which any receive from good husbands or wives, provident parents, merciful masters, diligent and trusty servants, or any other persons, are God's benefits. It is therefore most due that we inquire what may be rendered to the Lord for them.

Learn we hereby in all manner of benefits to roll up our eyes to God, and as we taste of the sweetness of them, so to lift up a thankful heart to him that giveth them. It is a swinish part to eat the meat

<sup>1</sup> Quis non appetat gaudebundus et letus in quo aliquid et ipse Domino suo retribuat?—*Cyp. Epist.*, lib. ii. cap. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 76. Semper habende gratie, et nemini alteri nisi soli Deo.—*Chrys.*, hom. 2. in 1 Cor. i.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxv. 1, Totum superne gratie tribuamus.—*Chrys.*, hom. 21 in Gen. 5; Ps. cxlviii.; Eph. v. 20.

<sup>2</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. 3, part 2, sec. 60, 61.

that falleth from a tree, and not to lift up an eye to the tree whence it falleth. It is not enough to render anything to man, or to any other creature, for the benefits we have. The prophet's query is, 'What shall I render to the Lord?' To render anything to the creature and nothing to the creator, is to neglect the principal donor: yea, to think more highly of the servant than of the master, of man than of God, which is no better then idolatry. When therefore thou hast a thought of rendering, inquire what thou mayest render to God, what may be pleasing and acceptable to him; for which we had a direction before.<sup>1</sup>

Sec. 80. *Of the consideration of God's benefits working gratefulness.*

IV. *A right understanding of God's benefits works gratefulness.*<sup>2</sup> On this ground, that the psalmist's soul did right well know God's works, Ps. cxxxix. 14, he maketh this inference, 'I will praise thee.' When the Israelites, Ps. cvi. 12, had such evidence of God's providence over them, as they believed his words, then they sang his praise. To induce men to be 'thankful unto God, and to bless his name,' Ps. c. 3, 4, the psalmist adviseth men to take notice of the kindnesses of God towards them.

Hereby is man convinced of the equity of the duty; which is an especial means to work upon the conscience, and provoke him to perform that which in his judgment he seeth to be most just and meet that it should be performed.

By this take notice of a main reason of man's ingratitude. The benefits of the Lord which occasion matter of thanksgiving are either not at all observed, but passed over without regard; or else soon forgotten. When the Lord by his prophet upbraideth to the Israelites their great ingratitude, he rendereth this reason thereof, 'Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider,' Isa. i. 3. And when the psalmist speaketh of their like ingratitude, he rendereth this reason, 'They forgat God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt,' Ps. cvi. 21. Where there is no knowledge of a benefit, there can be no good esteem thereof. What is not esteemed cannot be affected. No man will inquire what he may render for that which he

affects not. Again that which is forgotten is as not known, as not esteemed, as not affected. They therefore that either take no notice of God's benefits or soon forget them after they have once known them, must needs be ungrateful. But without all doubt, remembrance of kindness incites gratefulness.<sup>1</sup>

To prevent this crime of ingratitude, a crime most odious to God and man—

1. Be diligent in observing God's benefits, Ps. lxxxv. 8.

2. Oft and seriously meditate thereon, that they may not slip out of thy mind and memory, Ps. lxxvii. 11, 12.

3. Speak of them to others, as he that said, 'Come here, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul,' Ps. lxxvi. 16.

This is the way to make thee see and say, 'God's benefits are toward me,' and thereupon in testimony of gratefulness heartily to inquire, 'What shall I render to the Lord?'

Sec. 81. *Of a fourth property of gratitude, by one kindness to be put in mind of many.*

V. *Gratefulness raiseth the mind from some favours to all.*<sup>2</sup> This general particle, *all*, is not so strictly to be taken as if no favour or benefit were to be left out, for so many are the benefits which God from time to time doth bestow upon us, as it is not possible to fasten our mind upon them all, but it is to be taken of the several kinds of God's benefits, as general, particular, public, private, temporal, spiritual, &c., and of as many several and distinct branches of these as we can. Thus, when David was settled in his kingdom, and thereupon took occasion to praise God, in his psalm of praise—compare 1 Chron. xvi. 8, &c. with Ps. cxv. 1, &c.; read Ps. lxxviii. to the end—he reckoneth up all those kindnesses which God had done to his people from the time of their first fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; yea, he giveth this express charge, 'Talk ye of all his wondrous works,' Ps. cv. 2; so Jehosha-

<sup>1</sup> Non dubium quin excitet ad laudandum beneficiorum recordatio.—*Bern. super Cant.*, serm. 10.

<sup>2</sup> See sec. 76.

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 77, 78.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 76.

phat, 2 Chron. xx. 21, when he consulted, upon the promise of victory which God by his prophet had given him, to praise the Lord, the 136th psalm, which containeth a catalogue of all God's mercies, was appointed to be sung. That sweet singer of Israel, who well knew how to order his forms of praise to God, as affirmatively he promiseth to 'shew forth all God's marvellous works,' Ps. ix. 1, so he giveth a negative charge to his soul 'not to forget all,' or any<sup>1</sup> 'of his benefits,' Ps. ciii. 2.

As more fuel added to fire maketh the flame the greater, so more benefits brought to a heart set on fire to praise the Lord, enlargeth it the more, and inflameth it with a holy zeal.

This pattern is worthy our imitation, and affordeth an excellent rule to stir us up heartily, cheerfully, and zealously to praise the Lord. The rule is this, to be so acquainted with the several kinds of God's benefits, as on all occasions they may be presented to our minds. Without all question, the prophet's mind was upon many and sundry sorts of benefits when he said, 'all his benefits are towards me.' He did not confusedly use this general particule, all, as many do when they profess to thank God for all his benefits, and yet, have none at all in their minds. His spirit was otherwise disposed than to content itself with such a general, indefinite, cold, loose, formal form of acknowledging God's benefits. If we would accustom ourselves to make diaries of God's blessings on us, and when we are before God recount them in order, and oft call to mind how 'from our mother's womb he hath been our God,' Ps. xxii. 10, how, in every state and degree of our age he hath blessed us, and that with all manner of blessings, temporal and spiritual, privative and positive, conferred on ourselves and those that belong unto us, yea, on the nation, city, parish, or family where we live, then would not such a general clause as this, 'all his benefits are toward me,' be an idle clause, but the mind which is large in apprehension, where it is well informed, would comprise much matter on it, even so much as would set the heart on fire with zeal.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> א כל, per transpositionem et transmutationem ב in ד fit *ullus*.

<sup>2</sup> See in 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part 2, secs. 64, 65, &c., a catalogue of benefits.

Sec. 82. *Of particular sense of kindnesses whereby the heart is stirred up to thankfulness.*

VI. *Sense of God's kindness to one's self doth most enlarge the heart to thankfulness.*<sup>1</sup> Words of particular relation betwixt God that is praised and the persons that praise him, used in forms of praise, give good proof to this point. Such are these: 'O Lord, my God,' Ps. xxx. 12; 'My strength, my defence, the God of my mercy,' Ps. lix. 17; 'My rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my buckler, the horn of my salvation, mine high tower,' &c., Ps. xviii. 2. That which here is generally implied under this clause, 'All his benefits towards me,' is in sundry particulars exemplified throughout the whole book of Psalms. Take a few instances for many: 'Thou hast maintained my right, and my cause,' Ps. ix. 4; 'He took me, he drew me out of many waters, he delivered me, he was my stay,' &c., Ps. xviii. 16, 17. In particular, let the five first verses of the 103d Psalm be well observed for this purpose.

Men are most sensible of kindnesses done to themselves, the sweetness whereof their own souls do taste. Now, according to the taste and sense of a kindness is the heart quickened and stirred up to thankfulness. Though it be an effect of natural self-love, to affect the heart with such good things as a man himself is made partaker of, yet is it not against spiritual love to make an advantage thereof, and to use that affection of the heart to kindle and inflame our zeal unto a more fervent manner of praising God.

Among other mercies take especial notice of such as in particular concern thyself, as he that said, 'I will declare what God hath done for my soul.' In this consideration first mark such as are most proper and peculiar to thyself, whereof thou mayest say, 'He hath not dealt so with others,' Ps. lxxvi. 16. So did he who said, 'He chose David his servant,' &c., Ps. lxxviii. 70. Then observe what part thou hast in such as are common with others. And here consider what relation there is betwixt thee and those others, whether they be such as are committed to thy charge, nearly united to thee, of the same family, or alliance, or parish, or incorporation, or

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 76.

nation, or profession. Near relations will affect our hearts for benefits bestowed on them to whom we are united, as if they were bestowed on ourselves. Instance that affection which was wrought in the heart of Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 17, for the good success of his master's business, and the praise which he gave to God for the same. If in common blessings we find ourselves to have a share, we shall be the more quickened to give thanks for the same, as the people that rejoiced at the coronation of Solomon, 1 Kings i. 40.

Who are they that are now best settled to give praise to God for this admirable decrease of the sickness? Not they who thought it not infectious, nor they who thought they had such antidotes as the plague could not seize on their vital parts; nor they who thought themselves safe enough in the country. But they, who conceiving themselves to be in as great danger as others, perceived a special care of God over them in preserving them. That benefit which a man knows himself to receive from the light of the sun, influence of the heavens, sweetness of the air, and other like common blessings, will make him heartily to bless God for them. Search, therefore, narrowly, wherein God's benefits have been towards thee in special. Do this daily and hourly, not only about common benefits, which the maker of all conferreth on all, but about private and daily blessings,<sup>1</sup> and thou wilt diligently inquire what thou mayest render to him.

Sec. 83. *Of a fifth property of gratitude to be provoked thereby to make profession of benefits.*

VII. *Gratefulness works acknowledgment of kindness.*<sup>2</sup> All the acknowledgments which in Scripture are recorded to be made by any of the saints of God's benefits and mercies towards them, are demonstrations hereof: as of Noah, Gen. viii. 20; Abraham, chap. xii. 7; Melchizedek, chap. xiv. 20; Sarah, chap. xxi. 6; Abraham's servant, chap. xxiv. 27; Isaac, chap. xxxi. 22, 25; Jacob, chap. xxxii. 10; and many others.

Acknowledgment of kindness maketh much to the

<sup>1</sup> *Unum hoc obsecro, singulis diebus et horis suppetemus nobiscum, non communia tantum beneficia, quae toti naturae omnium opifex contulit, sed et privata et quotidiana, &c.—Chrys., hom. 26, in Gen. viii., et hom. 72, ad Pop.*

<sup>2</sup> See, 76.

honour of him that hath done the kindness. But he that indeed hath a grateful mind desireth to do all the honour that he can to the author of the kindness where-with he is affected. We heard before (sec. 77) how he requireth what he may render. Will not then that mind which maketh him so inquisitive to be further instructed in what he may do more, provoke him to do that which he cannot be ignorant to be acceptable? As for the Lord, he requireth thanksgiving in our words, not that he hath any need thereof, but that he may teach us to be thankful, and to acknowledge the donor of so great good things as he bestows.<sup>1</sup>

Can we now imagine that they who conceal all kindnesses done to them are grateful persons? Were the nine lepers, that, being cured of their leprosy, made no profession thereof, thankful? If they were, wherein consisted the difference betwixt them and that one of whom Christ thus saith, 'Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger,' Luke xvii. 17, 18. As great an evidence of ingratitude it is to keep close, not to make known, not to acknowledge benefits, as can be given.

Shew me then thy gratitude by the effect thereof: 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' Even to men are these benefits to be acknowledged. Thus Deborah acknowledged Jael's kindness, Judges v. 24; David, Abigail's, 1 Sam. xxv. 33; Saul, David's, chap. xxiv. 19; and many other, other men's. Much more to God must his benefits be acknowledged, in regard of the multitude, greatness, freeness, needfulness, profitableness, and continuance of them, together with many other circumstances whereby they are much amplified. And so much the rather, because acknowledgment is all that we can render to God; and it is all that God doth expect, which yet he doth most graciously accept. Make this holy profession therefore of the Lord's benefits to God himself and to men; make it to God in secret and in public; make it at all times, in all places; make it while the

<sup>1</sup> *Domibus in sermonibus gratiarum actionem exigit, non quod ea ipse opus habeat, sed ut nos doceat gratos esse, et agnoscere tantorum honorum suppeditatorem.—Chrys., hom. 26 in Gen. viii.*

benefits are fresh before thee; lay up his benefits in thy memory, that thou mayest in future times again and again make it. Acknowledge the benefits which thou hast received, and thou shalt be sure to receive more. The tenth leper, which returned to give glory to God, received thereby another and a greater benefit, which was the cleansing of his soul from the leprosy of sin, as this phrase importeth, 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' Luke xvii. 19. He was cleansed of his bodily leprosy before he returned. There was then somewhat more intended by the pronouncing of this after his returning to glorify God. The other nine that returned were cleansed in their bodies. This was said to him as an evidence of a greater benefit than that which they received. For God's sake, therefore, who is thereby honoured, and for thine own sake, who gainest thereby more benefits, acknowledge God's benefits, and say, 'His benefits are towards me.'

Sec. 84. *Of the interpretation and resolution of the thirteenth verse.*

Ver. 13. *I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.*<sup>1</sup>

The second part of the prophet's rhetorical addubitation is here expressed, which is an answer to his former question; whereby he sheweth that he made not the question simply on ignorance, as if he knew not what to render, but purposely to set out the great desire he had, and the forwardness that was in him to do, what he saw most meet to be done.

This phrase, 'cup of salvation,' is the most difficult and doubtful phrase of all the psalm. It is here figuratively used, and in that respect more subject to various interpretations. According to the divers significations of this word *cup*, (כוס) some take it one way, some another.<sup>2</sup>

1. It is taken for a part or portion; for in a cup

useth to be such a set portion of beer or wine, or physical potion, or such like thing, as may be thought fit for him to whom it is given; as where the psalmist saith, 'My cup runneth over;' Ps. xxiii. 5, his meaning is, the portion which thou hast given me is an abundant potion, even like a cup that runneth over.<sup>1</sup> On this ground, some<sup>2</sup> expound this place thus, 'I will thankfully take that portion which the Lord allots me, and use it to my salvation, calling on his name and worshipping him,' Isa. li. 17, 22; Mat. xx. 22.

2. A cup is put for affliction. For of old<sup>3</sup> they were wont to put poison into cups, and make such as were adjudged to death, to drink thereof. After this manner were Socrates, Psammenitus, Phocion, Theramenes,<sup>4</sup> and others put to death. Bitter things also are put into cups for medicines; and because afflictions are bitter, and as it were given to us by our wise and heavenly Father to drink, they are set out by a cup. Some therefore<sup>5</sup> according to that signification thus expound this text, 'I will willingly drink the cup of affliction, which the Lord shall be pleased to give me, yea, though it be death, which will assuredly turn to my salvation.'

3. The passion of Christ is styled a cup, Mat. xxvi. 39; whereupon many<sup>6</sup> imagine that the prophet hath here relation thereunto. An ancient father,<sup>7</sup> saith that the Hebrew thus hath it, 'I will take the cup of Jesus;' which an angel thus interprets, 'thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall

and by his own confession, was sent over to Spain, there to be proceeded against, in the year of our Lord 1618. This blasphemous heretic accounting the things that were written by the prophets and apostles to be mere dotages, said that David was one of the worst, and that in penning this psalm, he shewed himself to be a drunkard and a liar, by reason of this and the tenth verse. As if by taking the cup of salvation, he had intended the drinking of a health, as drunkards use to do. Whereby we see how dangerous it may be to take that literally, which is meant metaphorically.

<sup>1</sup> Per calicem mensura intelligitur, &c.—*Jerome, Comment. in hunc loc.* <sup>2</sup> Trevet., Genebrad.

<sup>3</sup> Sollicitoque bibas veluti doctissimus olium,

In perturbato quod bibit ore reus — *Ovid. in Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Herod., lib. iii.; Cic. Tusc., lib. i.; Pluta. in vit. Phoc.

<sup>5</sup> Origen, Hieron., Augustine, Plac., Parm.

<sup>6</sup> Lolinus alicque Papist.

<sup>7</sup> In Hebreo ita habet, calicem Jesu accipiam, &c.—*Jerome, Comment. in hunc loc.*

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 76.

<sup>2</sup> There was one John Lodwick, a Spaniard by nation, a monk by profession, who lived ten years together in England, lodging in a house by Bishopsgate, London, who day after day went forth in a beggar's attire, and as occasion was offered, belched forth most impious blasphemies against the blessed Trinity, especially against the sacred person of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, whom he ordinarily called Devil, and against the Holy Scripture, for which he was convented before authority, and being convicted by witnesses

save his people.' Indeed, the Hebrew name translated Jesus, יהושע, is derived from a root that signifieth *to save*, ישע; but the word here used, ישועת, is of the feminine gender and plural number. Yet by that which follows it may be gathered that by this very Hebrew word, the same thing is meant as by the name Jesus, namely salvation. They who apply the cup of salvation to Christ's passion, take it passively for martyrdom, or suffering for Christ, and so it little differs from the former interpretation. They who in these senses expound this text, say, that thereby is rendered the greatest thing that can be rendered by man, even his life.

4. In Holy Scripture there is mention made of drink-offerings, Gen. xxxv. 14; Lev. xxiii. 13; Num. xv. 5; which were a certain quantity of wine that used to be poured out before the Lord; as the very notation of the word importeth, coming from a root נסך *effudit*, that signifieth to pour out. As the meat-offerings, so the drink-offerings were brought to the Lord in way of gratulation and thanksgiving. Some<sup>1</sup> therefore in allusion hereunto so expound this text, as a promise and vow of the psalmist, to testify his public gratitude by such an external and solemn rite as in the law was prescribed. This he termeth a cup, because that drink-offering was contained in a cup, and poured out thereof; and he adds this epithet 'salvation,' because that rite was an acknowledgment of salvation, preservation and deliverance from the Lord.

5. After their solemn gratulatory sacrifices they were wont to have a feast. When David had brought the ark of God into the tabernacle, they offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, which being finished, 'he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine,' 1 Chron. xvi. 3. Hereby is implied that he made so bountiful a feast, as he had to give thereof to all the people there assembled. In this feast the master thereof was wont to take a great cup,<sup>2</sup> and in lifting it up to declare the occasion of that feast, and then in testimony of thankfulness to drink thereof to the guests, that they in order might pledge him. This

was called a cup of salvation, or deliverance, because they acknowledged by that use thereof that God had saved and delivered them. Almost in a like sense the apostle stytleth the sacramental cup, the cup of blessing.<sup>3</sup>

Here the prophet useth the plural number, thus, 'cup of salvations,'<sup>2</sup> whereby, after the Hebrew elegance, he meaneth many deliverances, one after another; or some great and extraordinary deliverance which was instead of many, or which comprised many under it. The word translated *take* (אשא *a sha*) properly signifieth to lift up, and in that respect may the more fitly be applied to the forementioned taking of the festival cup and lifting it up before the guests. Most of our later expositors<sup>3</sup> of this psalm apply this phrase, 'I will take the cup of salvation' to the forenamed gratulatory drink-offering, or to the taking and lifting up of the cup of blessing in the feast, after the solemn sacrifice. Both of these import one and the same thing, which is, that saints of old were wont to testify their gratefulness for great deliverances with some outward solemn rite.

The former interpretations of this phrase, 'cup of salvation,' applied to a portion, or affliction, or martyrdom, or the passion of Christ, though simply considered in themselves they be truths, yet they are not so pertinent to this text as the two latter, of a gratulatory drink-offering or a festival cup: for, without question a solemn thanksgiving is here intended, as is afterward in the 17th verse plainly expressed.

The other clause that is added, 'and call upon the name of the Lord,' is the same that was before used, ver. 4, and expounded. Here again it is repeated, partly to shew that in the forementioned gratulatory rite he would worship God.<sup>4</sup> He would do it piously and religiously; for prayer is an especial part of God's worship, partly to shew that though by God's delivering him he were now safe, and so had just occasion to praise God, yet would he not cease to pray unto God for continuance of his favour

<sup>1</sup> τὴν ποσὶν τῆς ἐκλογῆς.—1 Cor. x. 17.

<sup>2</sup> כוס ישועות. Calicem salutis.—Vatab, Omnis salutis.—Trencl.

<sup>3</sup> Calvin; Vatab; Muscul; Moller; Montan; Allique.

<sup>4</sup> Nomen Dei colam.—Vatab.

<sup>1</sup> Cajetan. Genebr.

<sup>2</sup> In mensa laticum libavit honorem, &c.—Virg. *Æn.* 1; *Ternch.* lib. xii. cap. 13; *Ath.*, lib. xi. cap. 11.

and blessing. He would both praise God and also pray unto him. Thus is the phrase of 'calling upon the name of the Lord' most properly taken.

This very duty of 'calling upon the name of the Lord' is again promised, and that as an appurtenance to thanksgiving, being added thereto in the 17th verse,<sup>1</sup> where I purpose to handle it in the general acception, as it signifieth worship done to God. Here I consider it in the particular and most proper signification, which is petition.

This verse being added as an answer to this clause, 'What shall I render to the Lord?' setteth out man's recompence to God.

It consisteth of two parts :

1. Gratulation.
2. Invocation.

The former is set out by a most solemn rite of rejoicing.

The latter is expressed by the action, 'I will call,' and by the object, 'upon the name of the Lord.'

The two main parts are joined together by a copulative participle, *and*.

Of the substance of solemn gratulation or thanksgiving sufficient hath been before delivered.<sup>2</sup>

The inference of this profession upon the former inquisition, this being an answer thereto, sheweth that—

I. Gratitude is the best recompence that man can render to God.

The manner of expressing it by a public rite of rejoicing teaches that—

II. Our inward motion of praising God must be manifested by some outward action of rejoicing.

Of the substance of invocation, even as it is here expressed, sufficient hath been delivered on the 4th verse.

The connexion of these two points, gratulation and invocation, importeth that—

III. With gratulation invocation must be joined.

The different manner of expressing invocation from that which was in the 4th verse,—for there it was set down as a thing performed in his trouble, 'Then called I,' &c. Here it is noted as a duty to come, which he promiseth to perform, 'I will call,' &c.; and that after his deliverance—implieth that—

IV. Prayer to God is to be continued after the thing prayed for is granted.

See. 85. *Of praise the best that man can render unto God.*

I. *Gratitude is the best recompence that man can render unto God.*<sup>1</sup> Surely this prophet that made such inquiry of what he might render unto God, if he had known a better would have here mentioned it. Where bulls, goats, and such like sacrifices are refused, it is said, 'Offer unto God thanksgiving,' Ps. l. 13, 14. Praise is one of the sacrifices with which 'God is well pleased,' Heb. xiii. 15, 16. Expressly it is said of praising God, that it 'pleaseth the Lord better than an ox or bullock,' Ps. lxxix. 30, 31, yet were those ordained for solemn sacrifices under the law; praise therefore is it which the psalmist doth especially vow to God, ver. 17.

God standeth in need of nothing that we can do or bestow. But we stand in need of all that is his.<sup>2</sup> Our thanks which we give him adds nothing to him, but makes him the more to respect us. By it, if it be rightly performed, God is acknowledged to be what he is, to give what he gives, and to do what he doth. More than this the creature cannot do; more than this the Creator nor exacteth nor expecteth, provided that it be not a mere lip-labour, but come from a heart thoroughly affected with his excellencies and kindnesses, and be ratified by an answerable carriage towards him.

More than monstrous in this respect must the sin of ingratitude needs be. It being only an acknowledgment of a truth, of such a truth as is most just and meet to be acknowledged; and this acknowledgment being all that the creature can do, and all that the Creator requireth, yet that wherein the Creator resteth fully contented, and that which he doth most graciously accept and highly esteem, what will they do or give that will not yield praise and give thanks to God? One would think that no man

<sup>1</sup> See. 83. *Autē omnia Deo gratias agamus, cui nihil gratius, nihil acceptius est.—Chrys., hom. 2, in 1 Cor. i.*

<sup>2</sup> *Deus alienius nostri non eget, sed nos omnium quæ illius sunt indigemus. Siquidem gratiarum actio illi quidem nihil omnino addit, nos autem illi magis familiares ponit.—Chrys., hom. 26, in Mat. viii.*

<sup>1</sup> See sec. 112.

<sup>2</sup> See sec. 76, &c., to this section.

should be guilty of this crime. But who is not guilty thereof more or less?<sup>1</sup>

For redress of this out-of-measure sinful sin, take due notice of the many, great, free, and constant mercies of God; and when through serious meditation thereon thou findest thine heart inflamed with desire to render something to the Lord, and thereupon art moved to inquire and say, 'What shall I render unto the Lord?' think of this answer made by the prophet. Vow praise to God. Give praise to God. Let praise be thy daily and evening sacrifice. It being the sweetest incense that by man can be offered to God, the best in the kind thereof, and the best also in God's account, let it never be wanting. 'In all things, at all times, give thanks unto God,' Eph. v. 20.

Sec. 86. *Of manifesting inward gratitude by outward gratulation.*

II. *Man's inward affection of praising God must be manifested by some outward action of rejoicing.*<sup>2</sup> For this we have precept and practice under the law and gospel. For the time of the law, Psalm lxxxi. giveth an excellent prescript. Answerable thereto was the practice of 'Moses and the men of Israel,' Exod. xv. 1, &c., who 'sung a song,' of praise to the Lord in testimony of their thankfulness for the great deliverance which God gave them from the Egyptians through the Red Sea, and of Miriam and the women following her 'with timbrels and with dances;' and of the women of Israel who, with singing and dancing and instruments of music, came to meet Saul and David after the overthrow of Goliath and flight of the Philistines, 1 Sam. xviii. 6; yea, and of David, who, after the settling of the ark in the tabernacle, had solemn offerings, and gave to all the people 'a loaf of bread, a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine,' 1 Chron. xvi. 3; and of Asa who, after his great victory over the Ethiopians, offered great offerings to the Lord, 2 Chron. xv. 11, &c.; and of Jehoshaphat, chap. xx. 28, who, with his people after their victory over the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, returned to Jerusalem 'with viols, harps, and trumpets.' So the Jews in Esther's time, and in Ezra his time, and at many

other times, Esth. ix. 17; Neh. viii. 10.<sup>1</sup> As the Jews were commanded with every sounding instrument to praise the Lord, so ought we with eyes, tongue, ears, hands, and all the body.

For the time of the gospel, St James giveth this advice, 'Is any merry? let him sing psalms,' James v. 13. St Paul, also, where he speaketh of giving thanks to God, he premiseth this direction, 'Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,' &c., Eph. v. 19, 20. In the primitive times of the church Christians were wont to have at that solemn time of thanksgiving, when the blessed sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus was celebrated, certain feasts, wherunto St Paul alludeth, 1 Cor. xi. 21, and which St Jude expresseth by the very name which was then given them, translated, love-feasts, or feasts of charity.<sup>2</sup>

By outward actions of rejoicing, if at least they be in their kind warrantable by the word of God, and for the manner of using them, if they be used moderately and temperately, as, and when they ought to be used, which are limitations that the heathen by the light of nature saw fit to be observed in matters of delight—I say, by outward actions of rejoicing.<sup>3</sup>

1. God himself is the more glorified; for we are commanded 'to glorify God in our body and in our spirit,' 1 Cor. vi. 20. 'God is indeed a Spirit, and they which worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth,' John iv. 24. Yet this hindereth not but that he may and must be also worshipped in body and in outward actions. He must ever be worshipped in spirit, whether with the body or without the body. Spiritual worship may be without bodily worship, and also stand with bodily worship; but bodily worship cannot stand without spiritual worship.

2. The spirits of others are stirred up to join with us in congratulation and mutual thanksgiving. When the people saw and heard Ezra bless the

<sup>1</sup> Sicut Judaei jubebantur omnis organi sono laudare Dominum, sic nos omni corpore laudare propelemus; oculis, lingua, auribus, manibus hoc debemus efficere. — *Chrys.*, hom. 4, in Ps. cl.

<sup>2</sup> ἀγάπαι Jude 12. — Cena nostra de nomine rationem suam ostendit; vocatur ἀγάπη, id quod dilectio penes Graecos est. — *Tertul. Apol. advers. Gent.* cap. 39.

<sup>3</sup> ἐπιθυμίαι ἐν ὄψῳρον ὡν δὲλ καὶ ὄρε, καὶ ὄρε. — *Arist. Ethic.*, lib. cap. ult.

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. ii. part 2, sec. 70, 71.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 84.



Lord, they answered, Amen, amen, with lifting up their hands,' Neh. viii. 6. When Hezekiah made it known that he meant to celebrate a solemn passover, 'many of Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulon came thereto,' 2 Chron. xxx. 5, &c. This is one principal end of external rites of gratulation—mutually to stir up one another's spirit.

3. Our own spirits are much roused and quickened hereby. Outward gratulatory actions, as they manifest an inward grateful affection, so they are means, as it were by a reflection, to increase the heat of gratitude, and inflame our zealous affection the more. Now our dullness and coldness in all pious duties giveth evidence that all means that can be used for quickening our spirits, are little enough.

Too austere and severe are they who censure as unlawful, and condemn all cheerful rites and actions of gratulation. Their main ground is the evil consequence which followeth from thence. But that followeth not from a lawful use of warrantable rites, but from an abuse of them, which is indeed unlawful. If abuse of a thing were sufficient to prohibit the use of it, the use of the most necessary and bounden duties which the word commandeth should be prohibited. It is an especial point of wisdom to discern whence every evil ariseth, and accordingly to be so circum-spect in avoiding the evil as a warrantable, commendable, needful, useful duty be not forborne thereby. The wise farmer neglecteth not to sow his ground because weeds will to grow among the corn. No wise man will forbid the drinking of wine because some by intemperancy are made drunk. Evil consequences arising from good things, give just occasion to be watchful over ourselves in the doing of those good things, that by our carelessness they prove not pernicious. So as it is not a sufficient plea for intemperancy, to say the thing that we do is lawful. He that hath warranted a thing to be done hath prescribed rules for the manner of doing it, by a due observation whereof good things will be well done.

In general, outward gratulatory actions must be—

1. Such as are approved by God himself, as those were which we noted in the proof of the point. For how can we think that those things which he approveth not will please him?

2. Such as may besem the occasion; even such

cheerful actions as may revive men's spirits; such also were those that are before mentioned. As outward rites of humiliation must be such as may humble the soul; so of gratulation, such as may quicken it, Ps. lxxxix. 1, &c.

3. Such as are not offensive; nor occasions to any corruption; as are drinking healths, especially on bare knees, and in measure above that which sober men are able to bear; lascivious dancing, revelling on the Lord's-days, and other the like.

Among other external rites of gratulation, that which is here intended (feasting) is a principal one. Thereof see 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iiii. part ii. sec. 73.

Sec. 87. *Of joining prayer with praise.*

III. *With gratulation invocation must be joined.*<sup>1</sup> As with our petitions we must join praises; so, with these, those. Prayer and praise are like two twins, which, though they have each of them their several and distinct members, yet by the navel are from their birth knit together, and so grow together, as if you force them asunder you kill them both; one without the other cannot live.<sup>2</sup> They are therefore in sacred Scripture oft joined together; sometimes one, sometimes another set in the former place, thus, 'In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God,' Phil. iv. 6; 'Pray without ceasing; in every thing give thanks,' 1 Thes. v. 17, 18; 'Give thanks unto the Lord: call upon his name,' Ps. cv. 1; 'Praise the Lord: call upon his name,' Isa. xii. 4. Observe the forms of praises and of prayers noted in Scripture, and you shall find where the principal occasion hath been gratulation, supplication to be added; and also where the principal occasion hath been supplication, gratulation to be added.

Such is our estate here in this world, and such is God's dealing with us, as there never wanteth occasion of both. Never was any saint brought into so desperate a distress but that through the mist of his misery sweet beams of God's mercy have shined upon him. Nor ever was there any set in so bright

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 84.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Hippocrat de Nat pueri. Sec. 44, de Gemellorum partu. Item, lib. i. de Dieta. Sec. 23, ubi tres reddit rationes ob quas Gemelli fiunt similes inter se.

and clear a sunshine of God's favour but that some clouds have let fall showers of sorrows; if not in outward troubles, yet in regard of inward corruptions, yea, and in the thought or fear of some eclipses of that sunshine. Thus in greatest occasion of hearty thanksgiving there is just occasion of humble petition. And where there is most cause of humiliation, there is also much cause of exultation.

Herein lieth a main difference betwixt men's estates here and hereafter. Hereafter in heaven is nothing but matter of gratulation; in hell is nothing but matter of exclamation and ejaculation; on earth there is a mixture of both.

As for adding invocation to gratulation, which is the particular here expressed, thereby our sacrifice of praise is sanctified. 'As every creature of God is sanctified by the word and prayer,' 1 Tim. iv. 5, so the actions that we perform, not pious and religious duties, and among them not the most principal, praising of God, excepted. The word sheweth it to be a warrantable duty. Prayer presented to God in the name of Christ maketh it an acceptable duty. And whereas everything that passeth from us is not only imperfect through the defect thereof, but also polluted by that sink of corruption which is in us; by faithful prayer the defect is supplied, the pollution is purged away.

'What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder,' Mat. xix. 6. Let us for removing evils, or for conferring any good thing, give all due thanks, and never forget the one or the other; but withal give ourselves to prayer, to continual supplications, and much piety.<sup>1</sup>

Sec. 88. *Of praying after God hath heard our prayer.*

IV. *Prayer to God is to be continued after the thing prayed for is granted.*<sup>2</sup> After that the psalmist, in testimony of God's hearing him, had said, 'I will praise thee, for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation,' he addeth, 'Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity,' Ps. cxviii. 21, 25. Many such passages

there be, as in the Psalms, so in other books of Scripture. Indefinite exhortations to pray—'in every season,' Eph. vi. 18, (*ἰν παντὶ καιρῷ*); 'always,' Luke xviii. 1, (*πάντοτε*); 'without ceasing,' 1 Thes. iii. 17, (*ἀδιάλειπτως*);—give good evidence to the truth of the doctrine. For if after God hath heard us we cease to pray, how can we pray 'without ceasing?' 'always,' 'in every season'? None can doubt but that God heard the prayers of his faithful servants in all ages, yet never did any faithful servant of God thereupon cease calling upon God so long as he lived. It is the style of a true saint 'to call upon God,' 1 Cor. i. 2; Acts ix. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 19. If they should cease to call upon God, they would shew themselves most unworthy of that dignity.

1. Some things there be, which, though on God's part they be granted, yet are we not so settled and satisfied in the grant of them, but that we may waver and doubt in our faith about them; as remission of sins, reconciliation with God, justification in his sight, conquest over our corruptions, sanctifying graces, and such like. Other things there be whereof we stand in daily need, as food, sleep, apparel, and other bodily necessities, means of spiritual edification, and the assistance of God's Spirit. And many evils there be wherunto we may fall again and again after we are delivered from them, as sickness, pain, imprisonment, captivity, &c. Yea, and all manner of sins and temptations to sins. In these respects, for the settling of our faith in that which God hath granted, for the continual supply of such things as we continually stand in need of, for keeping us from falling again into such evils as we have been delivered from, it is needful, it is useful to call upon God again and again even after he hath heard our prayer.

2. All those general motives that are of force to incite us to call on God before he hath heard us—as God's command, God's worship, God's honour, the necessity, utility, efficacy, and dignity of prayer—are also of force to provoke us to call on him after he hath heard us, yea, as long as we live.<sup>1</sup>

3. God's hearing our prayers is so far from making us cease to pray, as, among other motives,

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part 1, sec. 15, 16, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Gratias Deo agamus propter tentationum resolutionem, et harum nunquam obliviscamur; orationibus vacemus, supplicationibus continuis, pietati multe.—*Chrys. ad Pop.*, hom. 17.

<sup>2</sup> See, § 4.

it is a very forcible one to draw us to God again. For it giveth special evidence of God's readiness to hear and ableness to help, yea, and of his mind and goodwill to us in particular whom he hath heard.

How many are of a far other mind than this prophet was! If God have once heard them and delivered them from a distress, they have no care to call on God again, especially when they find and feel themselves safe. What! do they think that there is but one thing wherein God can do them good! Do they imagine themselves so secure as they cannot again fall into such need of God's help as they were in before! or can God be, as man, weary of doing good! Are many supplications and petitions troublesome to God! Pie of all such atheistical conceits! If any that have better understanding of God and of their own frailty, do notwithstanding fail in this duty, having had good success in their former performing it, they are either as beasts, which are affected only with that which is present, or worse than beasts, using God only for their own turns, and so care not to call on him but when they sensibly discern an absolute necessity for their own need and good.

For God's sake, for our own sake, let us in season and out of season, in distress and out of distress, to remove and prevent evils, to obtain and retain the things that are good for us, before and after God hath heard us, call upon his name. Let us that have called upon him say, 'We will call upon the name of the Lord.' Let this profession be in our hearts; let this profession be in our mouths; let an answerable performance be in our deeds, and that so long as we shall abide in the land of the living, where the Lord is called upon, that so we may indeed be in the number, and of the number, of those that call upon the name of the Lord.

See. 89. *Of the sense and parts of the fourteenth verse.*

Ver. 14. *I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.*

The first motive which the prophet useth to quicken him the more to perform the fore-mentioned duty of solemn praise is laid down in this verse.<sup>1</sup> It is taken from that bond whereby he had voluntarily tied himself, his vow.

<sup>1</sup> See 2.

The argument may be thus framed,—

That which by vow I am bound to pay, I will pay.  
But by vow I am bound to take the cup of salvation, &c.

Therefore I will take the cup of salvation, &c.

It appeareth by the manner of expressing this point, that in his distress he had vowed a solemn, public sacrifice of praise unto the Lord, if the Lord would be pleased to release him. For he saith not, I vow to pay this and that, but, I will pay what I have vowed.

The word thus translated, *I will pay*, אִשְׁלַם, signifieth to finish and perfect a thing, and is here fitly used to shew, that a vow, till it be performed, is as an imperfect thing; performing of it is the perfecting of it, if at least it be rightly made, and rightly accomplished.

He mentioneth *vows*, נְדָרֵי, in the plural number for emphasis' sake; either because he oft vowed one and the same thing, or because he vowed many things, or one solemn thing accompanied with many circumstances about the manner of performing it. Neither of these do so cross the other, but that all of them or many of them may stand together.

By a kind of property he applieth them to himself, ('my vows,') because he himself was the author of them; they were not imposed upon him, but he voluntarily bound himself thereto; and thereby he made them his own proper debt, which he himself stood bound to pay.

These vows were for performing of divine services, such as appertained only to the true God. Wherefore, as they were made, so he promiseth to perform them to the only true God, the Lord.

The latter clause setteth out the manner of performing the said vows; wherein—

1. He implieth the time when he would do it—now. This signifieth the present time, and is opposed to all procrastination and delay.

2. He intimateth the place—in the presence of people; in such places where people meet, which are public assemblies, and those not the least, but the greatest and solemnest assemblies, where not a few, but all the people meet. And that it might not be thought that he intended any profane assemblies, he adds this particle of limitation, *his*, which hath relation to the Lord; so as he meaneth all God's

people, who were wont all to meet together at the tabernacle, where God was most solemnly worshipped.

In this pattern we have the disposition of a saint delivered out of a distress.

His disposition is manifested two ways.

1. While he was in distress.
2. When he was delivered out of it.

The former is implied under the mention of vows. For from thence we may well infer that in his distress he made vows.

Here observe—

1. What was done : vows.
2. To whom ? To the Lord.

The latter is expressed. In which expression is noted—

1. The matter or thing to be done : ‘I will pay my vows.’

2. The manner of doing it : and that in three branches :—

1. The time—without delay, speedily, now.
2. The place—in a most public place : ‘In the presence of all the people.’
3. The persons—saints, whom he styleth his people.

The thing implied, and taken for granted to be done, importeth that—

I. Vows may be made.

The object to whom they are directed, the Lord, declareth that—

II. Sacred vows must be made to God.

The promise of performing them, I will pay, sheweth that—

III. Vows made must be paid.

The time here set down being the present, now, importeth that—

IV. The first opportunity to pay a vow must be taken.

The place where he professeth to perform this duty is ‘in the presence of all people.’ It is very probable that his vows were made in secret betwixt God and himself. This promise, then, to perform them openly and publicly, intimateth that—

V. Vows secretly made may be openly performed.

The limitation of the persons with this particle of relation, *his*, which hath reference to God, doth us to wit that—

VI. Saints are fittest witnesses of sacred duties.

Sec. 90. *Of making vows to God.*

I. *Vows may be made.*

II. *Sacred vows must be made to God.*

Though these be two distinct points (for vows are made to others than to Jehovah, the true God. Idolaters make vows to their idols, Jer. xlv. 25, and men make vows one to another, and that not only impiously, but piously and justly also, as husband and wife one to another, and subjects to their governors, servants to their masters, and other to others) yet the vow which is here mentioned, and which throughout the Scripture (for the most part) is approved, being a sacred vow, which hath direct respect unto God, I will not sever these two doctrines, but handle them as one. For all that I shall speak of vows shall be of sacred ‘vows to the Lord.’ For proof whereof we have both divine precept and approved practice : Ps. lxxvii. 11 ; Isa. xix. 21 ; Gen. xxviii. 20, 21 ; Ps. lxi. 8.

According to the words of the second doctrine (under which the first is comprised, as the general nature<sup>1</sup> of a thing under every species and particular kind thereof) I intend to touch upon these two points :—

1. The nature of a vow. 2. The directing of it to God.

1. To a vow properly so called, two things are especially requisite : 1. Intention ; 2. Obtestation ; or, to speak more plainly, a deliberate purpose and an absolute promise. The former first bringeth on the latter. The latter fast bindeth the former. A true intention and deliberate purpose must of necessity go before, because otherwise a promise will not be made, (for who will promise that which he intends not,) or if it be made, there is little hope it will be performed ; or if it should be performed, yet the very making of it without an intention and purpose is a plain mocking of him who is a ‘searcher of the heart,’ Acts. i. 24, and ‘understandeth our thoughts afar off,’ Ps. cxxix. 2. This, therefore, is necessary, but not sufficient. For a vow bindeth, as we shall hereafter shew, but every purpose bindeth not. After St Paul was minded to come to Corinth, 2 Cor. i. 15, &c., he altered his purpose upon just occasions. Many purposes come into men’s minds

<sup>1</sup> Genus sub specie.

time after time. If they had the force of a binding vow, who should be loose? Nay, with how many bonds would every saint be bound? Their case would be inextricable. They would have so many fetters, and manacles, and chains on them, as they could not tell how to shake them off, how to rid themselves. Many weak Christians, that take every purpose for a vow, are exceedingly perplexed, partly through their care to perform those purposes, and partly through their grief at their failings in those performances, supposing that they have broken so many vows. But to the essence of a vow must be added an absolute promise. Absolute, I say, in relation to man's faithful endeavour with his uttermost power to perform it, not in relation (or rather opposition) to God's purpose or providence, to his will or leave. For so can no man make an absolute promise. God can cross and hinder him. St James doth justly tax such as in this case make absolute, or rather peremptory, promises, James iv. 13, &c. This absolute promise I expressed under this word, *obtestation*, which is a fit word to express the nature of a vow. It signifieth a taking of God to witness, and that in particular for performing his purpose. This obtestation maketh it indeed a vow.

*Object.* Many vows recorded in Scripture are conditional: as Jacob's, 'If God will be with me,' &c., Gen. xxviii. 20; and Hannah's, 'If thou wilt indeed,' &c., 1 Sam. i. 11; and others.

*Ans.* A conditional sentence doth not necessarily import a doubtful matter, but is oft used as a ground of an absolute and undeniable conclusion: as where Elijah saith, 'If the Lord be God, follow him,' 1 Kings xviii. 21. Doth he here make any question of the Lord's being God? Far be such a thought. But hereby he brings them the more evidently to see their folly, and draws them from Baal to follow the Lord; as will clearly appear if we bring it into the form of a syllogism, thus: If the Lord be God, follow him; but the Lord is God, therefore follow him. A condition or supposition respecteth the manner rather than the matter of a vow. When, in making a vow, a necessary supposition is used, the vow is never a whit the less absolute, but the more discreet; as when I thus vow, If the Lord assist me, I will every morning pray before I go out of doors. Such a vow was Jacob's,

2. Hannah and Jacob, and others like to them, might have by special and divine instinct some assurance of that which they expressed in form of supposition, and in that respect their vow be absolute. Questionless Hannah had assurance that the Lord would give her a man-child, which made her in such particular and express terms vow to 'give him to the Lord all the days of his life,' and that there should 'no razor come upon his head,' 1 Sam. i. 11.

3. When a vow is made upon a condition, if the condition hold, and be, as it is supposed, accomplished, then the vow remaineth as absolute as if there were no condition; and the maker of the vow is as much bound in this case to perform it as if it had been made in the most absolute terms that can be. Yea, the condition may be such as it will more bind a man to his vow than if there had been no condition; as when the condition is a kind of consideration or a benefit in consideration whereof the vow is made. Thus, if in a storm on sea a man vow to give so much to the poor if he be brought in safety to his country, this providence of God in keeping him safe and bringing him home, more binds him to that work of charity than the most absolute vow that he could have made. Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 20, having made such a vow, neglected to perform it in due season. God, therefore, cometh to him, chap. xxxv. 1, and putteth him in mind thereof, that so he might not overlong lie drenched in that sea of ungrateful oblivion.

Thus, then, it is evident that a vow is an absolute promise of a deliberate purpose. Such a promise on such a ground doth as much order and bind the promise-maker as the command of one in authority doth order and bind him that is under authority.<sup>1</sup>

2. Such promises of sacred duties are to be directed unto God, to whom vows are most properly due. The charge of making vows mentioned in Scripture directeth us to God only: 'Vow and pay unto the Lord your God,' Ps. lxxvi. 11; 'They shall vow a vow unto the Lord,' Isa. xix. 21; 'When thou vowest a vow to God,' Eccles. v. 4. To God are all the approved vows in Scripture directed. In this respect are vows entitled God's vows. 'Thy

<sup>1</sup> Sicut homo, imperando ordinat quodammodo quid sibi ab aliis fiat; ita promittendo ordinat quid ipse pro alio facere debeat.—*Thom. Sum.*, ii. 2, q. 38, art. 1.

vows,' saith the psalmist to God, 'are upon me.' Ps. lvi. 12.

We heard that a vow ariseth from a true intention. Who can discern that but he who searcheth the heart? To whom do we owe such absolute homage as to bind ourselves in such a sacred and inviolable band as a vow is, but only to God, especially in such divine duties as are proper to a vow!

In regard of this object to whom our vows are to be directed, it is not necessary that they be uttered with words or manifested by signs.<sup>1</sup> When Hannah vowed her solemn vow unto God, it is said, 'She spake in her heart,' 1 Sam. i. 13. Indeed, the earnestness of her affection made her move her lips, and use such outward motions as Eli discerned her to be in some passion; but those were no signs of a vow. No creature could certainly have known thereby that she vowed a vow. As true and full a resolution, yea, and obtestation and promise too, may proceed from the soul by the very thoughts thereof, and be as well known to God, and as strongly bind a man as by words or signs.

Words and signs are of good use to testify to man such vows as we make to God, that thereby we may be held somewhat the closer to them; yea, and to quicken our own spirits the more, words are of use. But to the being of a vow they are not necessary. He that defined a vow to be a testification of a willing promise which ought to be made to God,<sup>2</sup> &c., came nigh the mark in directing a vow to God, but fell short in restraining a vow to an outward testification, if he meant only an outward testification.

But to return to the point. God being the proper object to whom sacred vows are to be directed, what may be thought of those vows which papists, not unlike to the idolatrous 'Israelites who vowed vows to the queen of heaven,' Jer. xlv. 25, vow to her whom they style the 'queen of heaven,'<sup>3</sup> and to other saints, and that in the same manner as they vow to God, namely, thus, 'I vow to God, and to blessed Mary, and to all the saints, that I will obey

such and such a prelate.'<sup>1</sup> Hereof they give this reason, that glorified saints are mediators and intercessors by whom we receive good things from God; yea, they are gods by participation. Thus they add blasphemy to blasphemy; ratifying a blasphemous position by a more blasphemous confirmation.

Concerning the position itself of making vows to saints.

1. The holy Scriptures give no intimation of any such matter; but where it maketh any mention of vows it directeth them to God: whereof the papists are not ignorant; for they who write of this controversy bring no show of any proof out of God's word for making sacred vows to creatures.

2. All, both ancient and later divines, both protestants and papists, that treat of vows, define it to be a promise whereby he that makes it binds himself in a sacred and solemn manner to God.

3. None deny but that a sacred vow is a religious act and a part of divine worship, and in that respect due only to God. To make it to any other is plain and palpable idolatry; yet ordinarily their vows use to be made to this saint and that saint.

For our parts let us so wisely avoid their detestable excess in making vows to whom they ought not, as we fall not into a careless neglect of the duty by making no vows at all. It is a fool's part so far to fly from one extreme as to fall into another.<sup>2</sup> As occasion is offered, and as we find any need, let us, among other evidences of that respect which we owe and bear unto God, give this of vowing and voluntarily binding ourselves to do that which we see meet and behoeful to be done for the honour of his name, and our well-pleasing of him; especially if we have just cause to suspect ourselves, that if we be left loose and at liberty, we shall (through the temptations wherunto we are subject, or through our own indisposition and backwardness to the duties which in our judgments we conceive to be most behoeful) fail to perform them. In such cases to bind ourselves by a sacred vow to a bounden duty, as it testifieth a wise jealousy and holy fear that we have of the proneness of our flesh to start back from

<sup>1</sup> In te est quod vocas et reddas.—*Ann. Enar. in Ps. lv.*

<sup>2</sup> Votum est testificatio quedam promissionis spontaneae que Deo, &c.—*Magist. Senta.*, lib. iv. distinct. 58.

<sup>3</sup> B. Maria Regine appellationem singulariter meretur.—*Bellar. de bon. opat.*, lib. i. cap. 15.

<sup>1</sup> Voveo Deo et B. Marie et omnibus sanctis, &c.—*Fellar. de cult. Svent.*, lib. iii. cap. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.—*Hor. Sat.*, ii., lib. i.

good intentions and motions of the Spirit, so it manifesteth our true and earnest desire of doing that which we are persuaded will be pleasing and acceptable to the Lord: yea, so true and earnest a desire, as we will not have it left to our liberty to do it, or not to do it: lest anything might fall out to alter our mind. Zealous martyrs, upon a settled resolution not to start in show from that profession which they are about to seal with their blood, being jealous of their weak flesh, and sensibleness of pain, have desired to be fast bound to the stake. A sacred vow is as an iron gin to a tender and good conscience. By it the will is unmoveably set and fastened upon that which is good: which questionless is a very commendable resolution.<sup>1</sup> The philosopher<sup>2</sup> through that light of natural reason wherunto by diligent study and experimental observance he had attained, discerned the equity hereof. He that so bindeth himself to that which he knoweth to be pleasing and acceptable unto God, as he will not leave a show of liberty to his unruly flesh to start from it, thereby fortieth himself against the temptations of Satan, and frailties of his weak and wavering flesh. In which respect, he that hath so tied himself hath no cause to repent himself thereof;<sup>3</sup> but he hath cause rather to rejoice that he is so restrained from that, which through supposed freedom might prove very dangerous and damageable.

Sect. 91. *Of paying vows to God.*

III. *Vows made must be paid.*<sup>4</sup> This is true of all manner of lawful vows, even such as are made to mortal men, much more of such as are made to the living God. Where in Scripture a charge is given for making a vow, there, for the most part, a charge also for paying it is annexed. 'Vow and pay,' Ps. lxxvi. 11. 'Pay that which thou hast vowed,' Eccles. v. 4. 'They shall vow a vow and perform it,' Isa. xxix. 21. Yea, there are more strict charges for

paying than for making vows. So as, when thou vowest, thou bindest thyself, namely to performance.<sup>1</sup> We read not of any penalty threatened for not making vows. But for not paying vows it is said, 'The Lord thy God will surely require it of thee: and it would be sin in thee,' Deut. xxiii. 21. They who vow and pay not, are counted such fools as God hath no pleasure in, Eccles. v. 4, 5. It is therefore better that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay. Frequent are the professions which the psalmist maketh of paying his vows, in these and such like protestations: 'I will pay my vows,' Ps. xxii. 25; 'Thy vows are upon me, O God, I will render praises unto thee,' Ps. lxxv. 13; 'I will sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows,' Ps. lvi. 12, and lxi. 8. Among other instances, take notice of the solemn vow he made for bringing the ark of the Lord into a settled place, Ps. cxxxii. 2-5; and withal take notice of his care to perform it, 1 Chron. xiii. 2, &c., and xv. 1, &c., and xvii. 1, &c. Hannah having vowed to give her son unto the Lord when she had weaned him, she brought him and gave him to the Lord, 1 Sam. i. 11, 24, &c.

1. Sacred vows have immediate respect to God; they are or ought to be made to him, as we shewed in the former section. But 'God is not mocked,' Gal. vi. 7. His sovereignty, his dignity, his majesty, his omnipotency, his integrity, his jealousy, and other like infinite excellencies in him, are forcible motives to press performance of promises to him. The wise man, where he is earnest in urging this point, rendereth this reason, 'God is in heaven, and thou art upon earth,' Eccles. v. 2.

2. Solemn vows consist of many bonds. There is in them, 1. The bond of a good intention, yea, and motion of the Holy Ghost: such intentions and motions must not be suffered to vanish away in vain.<sup>2</sup> 2. The bond of a single promise, which bindeth the conscience to performance. 3. The bond of an obtestation, and taking God to witness. Now, 'a threefold cord is not quickly broken,' Eccles. iv. 11.

<sup>1</sup> Per votum immobiliter voluntas firmitur in bonum.—*Thom. Sum.* 2. 7, q. 88, art. 6.

<sup>2</sup> τὰ κατὰ τὰς ἀρετὰς γινόμενα δικαίως πρᾶτται, ἐὰν βεβαίως καὶ ἀμετακινήτως ἔχωσιν πρᾶττειν.—*Arist. Eth.*, lib. ii. cap. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Non te vovisse peniteat, imano gaude jam tibi sic non licere, quod cum tuo detrimento licuisset.—*Aug. Epist.* 45, ad Arment.

<sup>4</sup> Sect. 89.

<sup>1</sup> Quia iam vovisti, iam te obstrinxisti.—*Aug. Epist.* 45 ad Arment.

<sup>2</sup> Melius fuerat te non vovisse et facere, quam vovere et non facere.—*Amb., lib. ad virg. de vot. cap. 2.*

Better were it not to vow what thou doest, than not to do what thou vowest.

1. What matter of humiliation is here ministered unto us for breaking this strong cord, for mocking God by our too much carelessness in keeping our vows, yea, and impious profaneness in breaking them! Who hath not cause to be much humbled in this respect! Some, it may be, will say, We never made any vows, and therefore cannot be guilty of breaking vows. Let such consider that most sacred vow which every of us made in baptism. Let them consider the like sacred vows made and renewed so oft as we have celebrated the Lord's supper. Let them consider the solemn vows that we have made in days of humiliation and fast. Let them also consider the public vows which, in the assembly of saints, have week after week been made. And as for others which are more conscionable in their duty, let us consider the private vows which in our daily prayers we make,<sup>1</sup> especially those which, upon some heinous sins lying heavy upon our conscience, in sickness or any other distress, in earnest desire of some special blessing, we have vowed. Consider these and other vows whereby we have fast bound ourselves to the Lord, and we shall see that the Lord hath cause enough to account us all sons of Belial,<sup>2</sup> refractory children, that will be kept under no yoke, no, not under those yokes that we have voluntarily put upon our own necks. We come in this respect too near to them who say, 'against the Lord and against his anointed. Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us,' Ps. ii. 2, 3. Thus do we justly deserve that God should disannul his promise and covenant of mercy and grace with us. Let these things be laid close to our consciences, that the wounds thereof may humble us, and, being penitently humbled, we may earnestly crave mercy and pardon for this sin especially. Sins against the third commandment, as blasphemy, perjury, and breach of vows, pierce deep into a sensible conscience. But though they make deep wounds, yet is there sufficient virtue in the blood of Christ to heal them: 'The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin,' 1 John i. 7. Apply that precious blood to the wounds of thy soul.

<sup>1</sup> Surrexi, redditisque Deo quotidianis votis, ire coperamus, &c.—*Aug. de Ord.*, lib. i. cap. 8.

<sup>2</sup> בלי עיל absque jugo.

Seeing that which is past and done cannot be recalled and undone, it is not meet that the wounds of thy conscience should continually be kept open, till all the life thereof be clean wasted. Therefore, in craving pardon for this sin, believe that it is pardoned; and then be more watchful over thyself, that thou fall not again and again into that sin.

2. To redress, for the time to come, what hath been heretofore amiss, let these following rules be carefully observed:—

1. On those vows whereunto, by virtue of thy Christian profession, thou art bound, being solemnly made at thy baptism, at receiving the Lord's supper, and in public prayer, oft and seriously meditate, day and night, when thou liest down and when thou risest up, when thou tarriest at home and when thou goest abroad; especially when thou undertakest any duty of piety, and art about in prayer to present thyself before God; but most of all when thou art present at others' baptism, and hearest the very vow which thou thyself madest before God. Frequent meditation on vows is an especial means to keep them fresh in memory: a fresh remembrance of them putteth life into the conscience, and maketh it sensible; a quick and sensible conscience is afraid of wounds; fear of wounds makes careful in avoiding the things which make wounds, as breach of vows doth. This, therefore, must needs be a good help for keeping vows, and performing them.

2. Oft renew thy vows, and so bind thyself again and again thereto. A vow renewed is as new made. Men use to be very tender of their vows when they are new made, or while they remain fresh; as they are of a new suit of apparel, or of the linen while it is clean and neat.

This direction of renewing vows is to be applied to vows of necessary and bounden duties.<sup>1</sup> But if vows made be of such circumstances as are not necessary, yet very difficult and cannot easily be performed, and much trouble and entangle the conscience, then, they being through weakness broken, the wisest and safest course is earnestly to crave pardon, as we heard before, for that which is past, and to take heed of the like folly in ensnaring ourselves for the time to come. If a thing be pre-

<sup>1</sup> Si præpropere facta fuerit, magis est corrigenda temeritas quam persolvenda promissio.—*Aug. epist. 45, ad Arment.*



posterously done, rashness is rather to be redressed than the promise performed.

3. When thou art tempted to a sin, bring that sin to the touchstone of thy vows, and try whether it be not against them. This trial will be a means to make thee think of thy vows, and to be more careful in keeping them, and in resisting temptations against them. When the Rechabites, Jer. xxxv. 6, &c., were tempted to drink wine, they considered that it was against an ancient vow, and thereupon were restrained from doing it. They were not ignorant of the damage of breaking vows.

*Object.* If there be such danger in breaking vows, it will be a man's safest course not to vow at all.

*Ans.* This is no good consequence; for, a good thing is not therefore to be wholly omitted because there is danger in an ill performing of it, or in a careless neglect of prosecuting that which is begun. 'He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination,' Prov. xxviii. 9. Is it therefore the safest not to pray at all? Fie upon such a consequence. The just consequence to be thereupon inferred is this, therefore turn thine ear to the law, and so pray. Such a consequence from such a ground doth the apostle make, for where he had said, 'Whosoever shall eat the bread, and drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,' 1 Cor. xi. 27, 28; he addeth, as a just consequence following thereupon, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.' He saith not, Let him forbear to come to the Lord's table. In like manner the danger and damage of breaking vows ought not to restrain us from making needful and useful vows, but it ought to make us careful and conscionable in performing them.

4. Concerning voluntary vows, that thou mayest with comfort, confidence, and good conscience perform them, be very wary and well advised in making them. 'Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God,' Eccles. v. 2. In nothing doth rashness sooner cause repentance than in this. Wherefore, for an advised making of vows,—

I. Consider what moveth thee to vow: what is the ground and occasion thereof. As an oath must not be taken without a just and weighty cause; so,

nor a vow made. A vow is a matter of much moment.

2. Take a view of thy condition, whether thou art in place, and hast power to make the vow which thou intendest,<sup>1</sup> and whether thou art not under such authority as may keep thee from performing it: if thou be in such subjection, how canst thou say, I will pay my vows?

3. Examine the matter which thou art about to vow, and be sure that it be such a thing as thou mayest lawfully and canst comfortably perform, otherwise thou bringest thyself into a labyrinth; for, the making of a vow bindeth a man to performance; performance of an evil vow bindeth a man to judgment. Thus, he that voweth an evil thing is as he that holdeth a dog by the ears. He knoweth not whither to turn.

4. Search thy heart and see how that stands affected; whether there be in thee a single, simple, full, resolved purpose to perform what thou vowest. An invincible resolution is an especial means to make good what is vowed.

5. Make thy vow with confidence on the assistance of God's Spirit to enable thee to keep it, suspecting thine own weakness. Peter's purpose was questionless sincere, Mat. xxvi. 33, 35, and his resolution was good, but self-confidence was his fault. He presumed too much upon his own ability, which, that he might the better discern, he was left to himself. Ye cannot accomplish such matters by your own strength; ye will fail if ye presume of yourselves, but if ye rest on him to whom ye vow, vow in the name of God, and ye shall assuredly perform it.<sup>2</sup>

6. In making thy vow, pray for ability to keep it. Yea, time after time, till it be performed, pray for this grace. So oft as thou makest a solemn prayer betwixt God and thyself, let one petition be for keeping thy vow. And if thy vow be of some duty to be in performing all thy life long, all thy life long pray for this in particular.

On these grounds go on in doing thy uttermost

<sup>1</sup> Quæ possunt et debent vereri docet.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. lxxv.*

<sup>2</sup> Viribus vestris non implebitis, deficietis si de vobis presumpseritis. Si autem de illo cui voveritis, vovete; securi reddetis.—*Aug. loc. citat.*

for making good thy vows, and that as thou desirest to have the covenant of grace in Christ made good to thee. Perform what thou hast vowed, perform it to the full. Of all sacrifices that which was brought for accomplishment of a vow, Lev. xxii. 21, 23, must be most perfect. Such defective sacrifices as might be offered for a free-will offering, would not be accepted for a vow.

Sec. 92. *Of speed in paying vows.*

IV. *The first opportunity to pay a vow must be taken.*<sup>1</sup> The law saith, 'Thou shalt not slack to pay it,' Dent. xxiii. 21. 'Defer not to pay it,' Eccles. v. 4, saith the wise man.

By delay the occasion that moved a man to make a vow may be forgotten. The occasion that set the heart on fire to make it being forgotten, zeal will soon wax cold, as water when fire is taken from the vessel in which it is, or iron taken out of the fire. Nor iron, nor water, nor any other thing naturally cold, is more inclinable to coldness if the cause of heating be removed, than man's heart is to wax heavy and dull when the occasions of quickening them are either removed, or, which is all one, out of mind and memory.

This, then, questionless is an especial occasion of not performing many vows; that they are not performed in their season, but opportunity is let slip. Had not God himself prevented Jacob, Gen. xxxv. 1, it is very likely that he would have failed herein; for he let slip his opportunity. We may observe it in all men's affairs, that by procrastination their resolution waxeth more and more slack. In nothing is this more verified than in matters of piety, matters wherein we have to do with God; and that both by reason of Satan's subtlety and sedulity, endeavouring with might and main to hinder us in all pious courses, and to weaken all the helps we have therein, (among which, vows are none of the slightest;) and also by reason of our own backwardness and dulness thereunto. Satan by time gains great advantage; and we by time lose as much, in that our zeal is prone to slack in the heat of it.

Strike the iron therefore, as it is in the proverb, strike it while it is hot. It is then fit to be wrought upon for anything. Take the first opportunity.

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 89.

which is the fittest season.<sup>1</sup> If in anything thou wilt make speed, and manifest forwardness, do it in performing thy vows. Hast thou made a vow whilst thou art at sea? pay it so soon as thou comest to land, if thou canst pay it so soon. Hast thou vowed in sickness? let the payment of it be the first thing thou doest upon thy recovery. So on other like occasions. Hast thou by vow bound thyself to read the word and pray every morning? let this be the first work thou doest being up. If thou hast any weighty business to do betimes, rise the sooner, that thy vow may be first done. Let all things give place to it; it, to nothing. A man that is able and willing to pay a debt, accounts no money his own till the debt be paid. He will keep in mind and memory the day of payment, he will watch for it; his money (as we say) burneth in his bags till it be paid. Account thy vow a debt. No debt can be more due; no bond more binding. A man of his word had as lief forfeit a bond, as fail of his word. Be thou a man of thy word with God. Pay thy debt, perform thy vow, and that on the day of payment, in due time; even now, if the now be come, defer not to pay thy vows. Very pertinent to this purpose, and emphatical, is this phrase of the psalmist, 'Thy vows are upon me, O God,' Ps. lvi. 12. Though he made the vows, yet he styles them God's vows; because, being made to God, they were as a debt due to him, as a bond made by a debtor to a creditor is not now the debtor's, but the creditor's. Thus, then, he accounts his vow as a due debt unto God. Thereupon he adds, 'Thy vows are upon me,' whereby he shews, that as a faithful debtor, who hath a mind to discharge his bond, oft thinks of the time of payment; and in that respect his debt lieth as a burden upon him, neither can he be quiet till it be paid; as a porter that hath a burden on him is not at rest till he be freed from it; so this psalmist had the vow which he had made to God as a debt, as a burden upon him, whereby he shews that his mind and desire was, with the first opportunity to be eased thereof, which could not be but by performing the same. Such respect let us have to the vows that we make to God; such let our care be in performing

<sup>1</sup> Libenter voveat, et celeriter reddat, et in hoc quod votum reddit meliori semper conatu proficiat.—*Aug. de Fide. ad P. Diaconum, cap. 3.*

of the same, and that with all speed, so as we may truly use these words, 'Thy vows are upon me, O God.'

Sec. 93. *Of performing vows openly.*

V. *Vows secretly made may be openly performed.*<sup>1</sup> This is to be limited according to the nature of the vow. Such things may be vowed, as in the performance of them, it is not meet that 'the left hand know what the right hand doeth,' Mat. vi. 3. The doctrine, therefore, saith not, Must be, but 'May be openly performed.' So were most (if not all) of the approved vows in Scripture: 'I will praise thee in the great congregation,' saith the psalmist, 'and pay my vows before them that fear thee,' Ps. xxii. 25; and again, 'I will go into thine house with burnt-offerings: I will pay thee my vows,' Ps. lxxvi. 13. Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 24, &c., brought her son, which she vowed to the Lord, unto the tabernacle at a festival time, when all the people assembled thither. Jacob, Gen. xxxv. 7, built an altar, a visible and open memorial of his vow. The Israelites, Num. xxi. 2, 3, gave a name, as a public proof of the performance of their vow, to the place where their vow was performed.

1. Hereby God is more glorified. An open testimony of that respect which saints bear to God, and of that care they have to bind themselves to do service to him, maketh much to his honour.

2. The church is hereby much edified. Instances of saints standing to their holy resolutions, and performing their pious purposes, cheer the strong, strengthen the weak, and thus is the church built up.

3. They that make the vows by this open manner of making them good cannot but be much more cheered in spirit, when they see their good intentions so much to tend to the advancement of God's glory and others' good.

They who in testimony of their due respect to God, and in way of gratitude, are moved to make vows to the Lord, let them here learn what are the best kind of vows, and by what vows they may give most honour to God, and do most good to themselves and others, even such as may be openly performed in public assemblies. For a prince, a

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 89.

nobleman, a magistrate, or any other of great esteem, of high place, of good note and name, to vow to join himself with assemblies that use to worship God together, to vow to maintain truth and purity of religion in the places where he liveth, is a worthy vow. For ministers to vow to preach the word where people are gathered together diligently and faithfully, a worthy vow. For such as are taken captives, in danger on the sea, imprisoned, visited with sickness, or any other way so distressed, as they are restrained from the public places of God's worship, to vow, when they are delivered, openly, publicly to give thanks to God, a worthy vow. In common judgments, especially of plague, of famine, of sword, such vows of public gratitude are to be made, and publicly to be performed. It is not enough to vow secret duties betwixt God and ourselves, nor yet private duties in our families, but by this pattern we have direction and incitation for more open, common, and public duties, which are more honourable kinds of vows. Yet that herein is a limitation the next doctrine will shew.

Sec. 94. *Of performing holy duties in holy assemblies.*

VI. *Saints are fittest witnesses of sacred duties.*<sup>1</sup> That which in this verse is implied under this particle of restraint, his, 'in the presence of all his people,' is elsewhere more expressly noted by a more apparent description, thus: 'I will pay my vows before them that fear him,' Ps. xxii. 25. None but true saints do truly fear God.<sup>2</sup>

1. This property of God's people, that they fear the Lord, sheweth that they will make the best use of such sacred, solemn duties performed in their presence. They will glorify God for this your zeal; they will join their spirits with your spirit in this open performance of duty; they will become followers of you, and learn of you to vow and pay unto the Lord, and that openly, publicly.

2. As for others, they are no better than such hogs and dogs as are not meet to have such precious pearls and holy things cast before them, lest they trample them under their feet.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 89.

<sup>2</sup> Confiteor non tantum coram te, Domine, &c. Sed etiam in auribus credentium, filiorum hominum, sociorum gaudii mei, &c.—*Aug. Confess.*, lib. x. cap. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Mat. vii. 6.

Be wise now, ye that are moved to give open and public testimony of your inward and private resolution. Be wise in making choice of your company. You that have escaped sundry dangers on sea and land, that have had victory over enemies, that have been eased and recovered of any maladies, that have been preserved from the plague, that have had any other evidence of God's special providence and favour, let not play-houses, let not taverns, ale-houses, and tobacco-houses, let not assemblies of profane persons, of swearers, of drunkards, of riotous and licentious persons, be the places whither you resort to recount the deliverances which God hath given you. This rather beseebeth such as have vowed vows to Bacchus, to Ceres, to Priapus, to Venus, yea, and to devils, than to the great Lord of heaven and earth. Associate yourselves with the saints, with such as fear God, with such as may encourage you in that which you do well, and instruct and direct you in that whereof you are ignorant and wherein you do amiss. Go to that place where that God who hath preserved, delivered, or any way blessed you, delighteth to be; where he most manifesteth his presence, where he expecteth that your vow should be paid to him. Let your heart be set upon that place while by force you are kept from it, as David's was, Ps. lxxxiv. 1, &c. So soon as possibly you can, come to it. You captains, soldiers, merchants, mariners, travellers, or others that come from the sea, or other dangerous places; and you women safely delivered in child-bed, you that have been sick and are recovered, you that have been cut of the stone, or cured of any other malady, you that are loosed out of prison, you that after any restraint have liberty, let this be the first public place that you come unto. So soon as you can say, say it in truth, say it and do it, 'I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.' Amen.

Sec. 95. *Of the meaning and method of the 15th verse.*

Ver. 15. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*

The second reason<sup>1</sup> to enforce the equity of the duty before mentioned, 'to praise the Lord,' is here expressed, being taken from the high account which God had of his life. This is here indefinitely set

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 2.

down in the third person, (*κατὰ θεόν*.) without any express application thereof to himself, yet so as by the precedent and subsequent matter it may evidently be gathered that he meant himself as well as others; for in the verses before and after he useth the first person, and expressly speaketh of himself, thus: 'I will pay,' &c. 'I am thy servant,' &c. To good purpose is this tender care of God thus indefinitely set down, as—

1. To shew that his case was no other than the case of others. Others, and those saints too, might be brought even to death as well as he.

2. To declare the impartial respect of God to all; to others as well as to him, to him as well as to others.

3. To intimate the ground of that care God had of him, even because he was a saint; and yet not himself to give that title to himself, lest he might seem to do it on vainglory.

Thus we see how this change of person from the first, ver. 14, to the third, ver. 15; from the third, ver. 15, to the first, ver. 16, as it hath an elegancy in it, so also an especial emphasis.

The persons among whom implicitly he reckons himself, styled saints, are in the original set out by a word (*חסידים*) that importeth an especial respect of God towards them. The root whence that word issueth signifieth *mercy*, (*חסד consecravit, benefecit*.) Whereupon the Hebrews have given such a name to a stork,<sup>1</sup> which kind among fowls is the most merciful; and that not only the old to their young ones, as most are, but also the young ones to the old, which they use to feed and carry when through age they are not able to help themselves. This title is attributed to men in a double respect: 1. Passively, in regard of God's mind and affection to them; 2. Actively, in regard of their mind and affection to others. God's mercy and kindness is great towards them; and their mercy and kindness is great towards their brethren. They are, therefore, by a kind of excellency and property styled 'men of mercy,' Isa. lvii. 1.<sup>2</sup> In regard of this double acceptance of the

<sup>1</sup> *חסידה*. Ciconia. Avis benefica, et grata. Quantum temporis Ciconiæ suis fetibus educandis elargiuntur, tantum et ipsæ a pullis suis invicem aluntur.—*Solinus*.

Petronius appellat Ciconiam pietatis cultricem.

<sup>2</sup> *אנשי חסד*. Homines benignitatis.

word, some translate it, 'merciful, tender, or courteous,' Ps. xviii. 25.<sup>1</sup> Others with a paraphrase with many words, because they have not one fit word to express the full sense, thus, 'Those whom God followeth with bounty,<sup>2</sup> or to whom God extendeth his bounty. This latter I take to be the most proper to this place; for the word being passively taken for such as are made partakers of God's kindness, it sheweth the reason of that high account wherein God hath them, even his own grace and favour. We have a word in English that in this passive signification fitly answereth the Hebrew, which is this, *favourite*.

By death he meaneth their soul or life which is subject to death; for in another place he saith, 'Precious shall be their blood in his sight,' Ps. lxxii. 14. What here he calleth death, there he calleth blood. And in Scripture phrase blood is said to be the life (Gen. ix. 4; Lev. xvii. 14) of living creatures. Very fitly is this privative, death, mentioned in setting forth God's care over their life, because by their death it is manifested, partly by preserving them from death, and partly by providing for them in death. A trope not much unlike to this is used where God saith, 'I will be merciful to their unrighteousness,' Heb. viii. 12; that is, to them in freeing them from their unrighteousness.

The word translated precious, (רָקִי) is in Scripture attributed to things—

Rare or scarce: 'The word of God was precious,' 1 Sam. iii. 1.<sup>3</sup>

Sweet: 'A good name is better than precious ointment,' Eccles. vii. 1. The preciousness of an ointment is in the savour of it.

Pure or holy: 'Take forth the precious from the vile,' Jer. xv. 19.

Honourable: 'Kings' daughters among thine honourable' (word for word, precious) 'women,' Ps. xlv. 9.

Dear or beloved:<sup>4</sup> 'Ephraim my dear' (word for word, precious) 'son,' Jer. xxxi. 20.

Much set by or of great account: 'His name was much set by' (word for word, precious), 1 Sam. xviii. 30.

Of great value or worth: Such were the stones

which the queen of Sheba brought to Solomon, 'precious stones,' 1 Kings x. 10.

The souls of saints are every way precious to God; especially in the three latter respects, as they are dear, much set by, of great worth, being redeemed by the precious blood of Christ; for he deals with them as men do with things dear, much set by, of great value.

Men use to keep precious jewels safe. They make more esteem of them than of all other things. They will not be prodigal of them. They will see good cause why they should part with them, or else they will not part with them. This is God's mind towards the souls of his favourites. Saul acknowledgeth that 'his soul was precious in David's eyes,' 1 Sam. xxvi. 21, because he did not take it away when he had opportunity. Surely then their souls must needs be precious to God, who doth not only not take them away when he may, but also preserve them when they are in great hazard of death. On the contrary, when St Paul esteemed not his life in comparison of the gospel, but was rather prodigal thereof, he saith, 'I count not my life precious'—or dear—'to myself.'

This phrase, 'in the sight'—word for word, in the eyes, Acts xx. 24, (בְּעֵינַי)—'of the Lord,' is used by way of resemblance, to shew that God taketh notice of our life and death, and is watchful over the same, as men take notice of the things which are before them, and by fixing their eyes on things do manifest a watchfulness; or otherwise it may indefinitely be used as a note of application only; and so, 'in the sight of the Lord,' imports no more but 'to the Lord,' as if it had been thus said, 'Precious to the Lord is the death of his favourites.'

In this verse is set out, God's esteem of men.

More particularly here is noted,—

1. What these men be—'His favourites.'

2. Wherein that esteem consisteth—'Their death is precious in his sight.'

These two parts give evidence of these two points,—

I. God hath favourites.

II. God is tender of his favourites' death.

Sec. 96. *Of God's favourites.*

I. *God hath favourites.* Without all question they

<sup>1</sup> Cum benigno benignum te exhibes.

<sup>2</sup> Quos ipse benignitate prosequitur.—*Tremel. et Jun.*

<sup>3</sup> Hebrew, רָקִי. Targum כְּסִי occultum.

<sup>4</sup> LXX., ἀγαπητός.

were his favourites that had these testimonies following: 'The Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering,' Gen. iv. 4. 'Enoch was translated that he should not see death; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God,' Heb. xi. 5. 'Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord,' Gen. vi. 8. 'Abraham was called the friend of God,' James ii. 23. 'The Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend,' Exod. xxxiii. 11. 'The Lord said to Joshua, I will be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee,' Josh. i. 5. And to David, 'I have found David, a man after mine own heart,' Acts xiii. 22. Solomon was called Jedidiah, 2 Sam. xii. 25, (יְדִידָי, *dilectum Deo*, *Companioner ex ידי et די nomine Dei*.) 'because of the Lord: the Lord loved him.' 'Daniel, a man greatly beloved,' Dan. x. 11. 'Zerubbabel, as a signet,' Hagga ii. 23. 'John, the disciple whom Jesus loved,' John xxi. 7. The rest of the disciples he called 'friends,' John xv. 15. And 'Paul, a chosen vessel,' Acts ix. 15. Yea, to the whole communion of saints these titles are given: 'A peculiar treasure above all people,' Exod. xix. 5; 'A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation,' 1 Pet. ii. 9; 'The apple of God's eye,' Zech. ii. 8; 'Dearly,' or only 'beloved children,' Eph. v. 1, (ἀγαπᾶ τίμα); 'First-born,' Heb. xii. 23; 'Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ,' Rom. viii. 17; 'Begotten again to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven,' 1 Pet. i. 4. If they that are made partakers of such prerogatives be not compassed about and followed with mercies, if they be not favourites, and that in regard of the favour of the great Lord and King of heaven and earth, surely there can be no favourites at all.

These and other like to these being 'chosen in Christ,' Eph. i. 4, are 'given,' John vi. 39, of the Father to him, and by him are 'redeemed,' Eph. i. 7, 'reconciled,' chap. ii. 16, 'sanctified, cleansed, made holy and without blemish,' chap. v. 26, 27, and 'made accepted,' chap. i. 6. The beloved One of God hath taken these for 'his wife,' 2 Cor. xi. 2; Rev. xxi. 9, and made them 'members of his body,' Eph. v. 30; by virtue of which mystical and real union, God loveth them with that love he beareth unto Christ, John xvii. 23, and so maketh them his

favourites. The very word of this text is primarily attributed to Christ, Ps. xvi. 10; Acts ii. 27, &c., and xiii. 35; and in and through him to others.

Good and great ground of comfort have saints by reason of this prerogative that they are the favourites of the great King. What needful thing do they want that they may not confidently expect from this their liege? What hurtful thing need they fear? Is not the King who favours them able to supply all their necessities? Is he not able to protect them from all enmities? If he be, what doubt can be made of the one or of the other? Consider what mortal monarchs do for their favourites. They invent, they consult how to do them honour, Esth. vi. 3, &c. Though it oft fall out that they have unworthy favourites, (instance Haman,) yet a king can deny his favourite nothing. Let a favourite ask honours, manors, offices, immunities, for himself or for his friends, he soon obtaineth what he asketh. 'In the light of the king's countenance is life,' Prov. xvi. 15; 'and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain, and as the dew upon the grass,' Prov. xix. 12. He is therefore counted a happy man that may come to be a king's favourite. Such a one scorneth the envy, the disdain, the backbiting, and all that the vulgar can do against him. As for all his enemies, he puffeth at them. If it be thought a happiness to be a mortal king's favourite, what is it then to be a favourite of the King of kings? Kings on earth are not always able to do what they will. Their favourites may desire, and they may be willing to grant, more than they can. They have not always understanding to know what is best for their favourites. Their favourites may beg, and they give, that which is pernicious. They do not always retain the same mind. Their favour may be clean alienated from their old favourites, and cast upon new. They do not always live. They may die before their favourites, and their favourites then be the worse dealt withal, even for that favour sake which by the deceased king was shewed unto them. Most of these may be exemplified in Ahasuerus and his favourite Haman. But the Lord our God is subject to none of these. He is able to do what he will, and what his favourites can justly ask. He knoweth what is good, what not good, to be granted to his favourites. He is always of the same mind.

His favour is stable and perpetual. He ever liveth. It never did, it never shall, it cannot repent any to have been this King's favourite. As Christ himself, that high and chief favourite said, so may every one that is in him accepted for a favourite say, '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,' Ps. xvi. 5, 6. If thou wilt acknowledge the truth, God is thy delight, thy rest, thy health, thy joy, thy happiness, thy refreshing, thy glory; and whatsoever thy soul may piously desire, God will be all that to thee.<sup>1</sup>

Boldly and safely may we also on this ground encourage ourselves against all the envy, malice, ill-language, and evil entreating of the men of this world. What if the world account us forsaken, desolate, so long as God saith to us, 'Hephzibah, my delight in them?' Isa. lxii. 4.

That we may the more soundly and safely comfort and encourage ourselves in this great prerogative of being God's favourites, let us distinctly note what evidences of God's favour towards his favourites the Holy Ghost doth expressly set down, and that in one book, the book of Psalms.

1. 'The Lord sets apart him that is a favourite<sup>2</sup> to himself,' Ps. iv. 3.

2. 'Every favourite shall pray unto God in a time when he may be found,' Ps. xxxii. 6.

3. 'God's praise is in the congregation of favourites,' Ps. cxlix. 1. They are incited to 'sing to the Lord,' and 'to bless him,' Ps. xxx. 4, and cxlv. 10.

4. 'The Lord will speak peace to his favourites,' Ps. lxxxv. 8.

5. 'He preserveth the souls of his favourites,' Ps. xevii. 10.

6. 'He exalteth the praise of his favourites,' Ps. cxlviii. 14.

7. 'Favourites shall shout aloud for joy,' Ps. cxxxii. 16.

<sup>1</sup> Si vis verum agnoscere, Deus est deliciae tuae, requies tua, sanitas tua, gaudium tuum, felicitas tua, refrigerium tuum, amœnitas tua, et quicquid sancte possit desiderare anima tua, totum tibi Deus erit.—*Aug. ad Frat. in Evam.*, ser. 55.

<sup>2</sup> In all the places thus following, the word (הַיְחִיָּד) used in this text is expressed, though translators do diversely turn it.

8. 'This honour have all his favourites,' Ps. cxlix. 9.

That we be not puffed up with this prerogative, but rather provoked to 'walk worthy of the Lord,' Col. i. 10, 'worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called,' Eph. iv. 1, our care must be—

1. 'To understand his will,' Eph. v. 17.

2. 'To love him with all our soul,' Deut. vi. 5; Ps. xxxi. 23.

3. 'To cleave to him,' Joshua xxiii. 8.

4. 'To give thanks to him,' Ps. xxx. 4.

5. 'To do that which is well-pleasing in his sight,' Heb. xiii. 21.

6. 'To be followers' of his ancient favourites, Heb. vi. 12.

God hath been pleased to choose us in their room, they being translated; he bears such a mind to us as he did to them.<sup>1</sup> Is it not then most just and equal that the same mind should be in us, that was in them, towards God; that the faith of Abel, conversation of Enoch, uprightness of Noah, obedience of Abraham, meekness of Moses, courage of Joshua, devotion of David, repentance of Solomon, constancy of Daniel, love of John; such readiness to follow Christ as was in the disciples, and other like properties in other favourites of God, may be in us, that so it may never repent the Lord that he hath cast his favour upon us, and made us his favourites? God still remains the same; the same in his essence, the same in his mind and affection, to such as are so minded and affected towards him as his ancient favourites were. Wherefore though Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and other favourites be dead and gone, yet let their spirit appear to live in us; that, while we live, God may not want favourites on earth; but that we for the present may shew that we have so set before us the life of our predecessors, as we become examples and patterns to our successors.

#### Sec. 97. *Of God's account of saints' death.*

H. *God is tender of his favourites' death.*<sup>2</sup> Their blood he accounts precious, Ps. lxxii. 14. If he

<sup>1</sup> Si voluntatem Dei nosse quisquam desideret, fiat amicus Dei. Non autem quisquam efficitur amicus Dei, nisi purgatus simul moribus.—*Aug. cont. Manich.*, lib. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 95.

have a bottle for their tears, what hath he for their blood? Ps. lvi. 8. Christ doth forcibly infer his Father's care of the life and death of his favourites, by arguments from the less; as first from one of the meanest of creatures, thus, 'One sparrow shall not fall on the ground without your Father,' Mat. x. 29-31. Then from the meanest accident that is inherent in man, his hairs, which are no essential parts, but excrements of his body, thus, 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered.'<sup>1</sup> Thence he maketh this inference to his favourites, 'Fear ye not therefore.'

God's high account of his favourites' life, and tenderness over their death, is many ways manifested.

1. By promise of long life,<sup>2</sup> Ps. lxli. 16.

2. By preserving them in extraordinary need; whereof we have a particular instance in Elijah, 1 Kings xvii., and a more general promise, Ps. xxxiv. 10.

3. By keeping them from such things as may endanger their life; thus the Lord hid Jeremiaah and Baruch, Jer. xxxvi 26, and sent his Son into Egypt, Mat. ii. 13.

4. By pulling them out of the very snares of death, wherewith they were even caught. This the psalmist oft acknowledgeth, as Ps. xvi. 3, 8, xviii. 4, 5, and exxiv. 7. Thus Jeremiaah, chap. xxxviii. 6, &c.; Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 4, 5; the Israelites, Exod. xiv. 9, &c., and many others have been delivered.

5. By not suffering them to perish before they come to their maturity and ripeness. This is set out in the parable of the seed that grew till the harvest. Then, 'when the fruit is ripe,' and not before, the Lord putteth in the sickle, Mark iv. 26, &c.

*Objec.* Many die young. Many are taken away suddenly, yea, by unjust and violent means, before their time.

*Ans.* The Lord knoweth what measure of grace is fittest for every one; answerably he hath determined it; and so ordereth their estate as they come to it. One may be perfect in one measure, another in another, as the several fingers or toes,

<sup>1</sup> Ant. Ulnus: De duplici usu humane barbae.

<sup>2</sup> Of long life, how far promised, see 'Domestic Duties,' on Eph. vi. 3, treat. 1, sec. 104, &c.

and other members of the body; and as several pots or other measures; a pint may be full with half that quantity which filleth a quart. The saint, therefore, that dieth young, hath attained to that measure which is appointed to him. And as for such violent or sudden means which to men may seem to take away saints before their time, that untimeliness and immaturity is only in man's apprehension. In God's disposition their time was come, and they come to their ripeness.

6. By revenging their death when they are unjustly taken away. 'God is known by revenging the blood of his servants which is shed,' Ps. lxxix. 10. The revenge that followed the blood of Naboth, 1 Kings xxi. 19, &c., and the blood of Zechariah, 2 Chron. xxiv. 21, &c., is memorable.

7. By sending his 'angels to encamp round about them,' Ps. xxxiv. 7, 'to keep them in all their ways, and to bear them up in their hands, lest they dash their foot against a stone,' Ps. xci. 11, 12, and to watch their souls when they depart from their bodies, to 'carry them into Abraham's bosom,' Luke xvi. 22.

That which before was noted of God's respect to the persons themselves, whom he so compasseth with his favour, as he maketh them his favourites, sheweth the true and proper cause of this account wherein he hath their life, and of the care he taketh of their death. He that much esteemeth such and such persons, cannot but much esteem their life and death.

Great courage against death, and much comfort in death, doth this work.

1. What need they beforehand be afraid of death, who have the Lord to take such care about it as he doth? We may safely without presuming, we ought securely without wavering, to rest upon this, that our blood being precious in God's eyes, either it shall not be spilt, or it is seasonable, and shall be profitable to us to be spilt. On this ground, 'The righteous are bold as a lion,' Prov. xxviii. 1. 'Neither do they fear what man can do unto them,' Heb. xiii. 6. Martyrs were, without question, well instructed herein, and much supported hereby.<sup>1</sup> When fear of death hindereth from any duty, or draweth to any evil, then call to mind this saying, 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his favourites.'

<sup>1</sup> Quis non pretiosam in conspectu Dei et fortiter et constanter mortem excipiat.—*Cyp. Epist.*, lib. iii. ep. 23.



For who would not valiantly, without fainting, take such a death as is precious in God's sight?

If death may not affright us from good nor enforce us to evil, shall reproach, shall restraint of liberty, shall loss of profits or preferments, shall anything less than death be more forcible than death? Assuredly their name, estate, liberty, and everything else is precious to him, to whom their life and death is precious.

2. Admirable is the comfort which, on the fore-named ground, God's favourites have, or may have, in their death. Natural men account death the most terrible thing that can befall a man, because they conceive it to be the period of a man's happiness.<sup>1</sup> But they whose 'death is precious in God's sight' cannot conceive it to be so terrible, much less such a period. For then would God keep them from death. In that their death is precious, 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord,' Rev. xiv. 23. When they die, there is good cause they should die. The wise God will not let go a precious thing without cause. Yea, he will not let it go without advantage. Their death is advantageable to God, to themselves, to others.

This may surviving friends apply to the death of such as are taken away, be they magistrates, ministers, husband, wife, parent, child, neighbour, kinsman, or any other, especially if they have left any evidence of God's favour towards them. Such are but gone before us, not clean gone away from us. Missed they may be; they may not be lamented as lost. Occasion is not to be given to Pagans of just reproof in that we lament those as perished and lost, whom we avouch to live with God,<sup>2</sup> and so by the expression of our inward affection disannul that faith which by word we profess.

3. This high account which God maketh of his favourites' death, is a forcible motive to stir us up to give all diligence to be of the number of these favourites, that so our tears may be kept in God's bottle, our complaints in his bosom, our cries in his ears, our bodies within the guard, even in the hands of his angels, our souls bound in the bundle of life,

our life and death in the treasure of his jewels, as a precious thing. For, 'precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his favourites.' Yea, the soul of one saint is more precious to him than infinite multitudes of sinners.<sup>1</sup> Let us covet therefore, and with our utmost power endeavour, to be of this blessed society of saints, and not consorts of sinners.

Sec. 98. *Of the exposition and resolution of part of the sixteenth verse.*

Ver. 16. *O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid.*

The third reason<sup>2</sup> whereby the prophet was rather induced to render solemn praise to God, is here laid down; and it is taken from the constant favour of God towards him. God of old had taken him, even from his mother's womb, to be his servant, and still continued that grace to him; therefore he would praise him. The argument may be brought to this brief form—

God's ancient servants must praise him;

But I am God's ancient servant;

Therefore I must praise him.

I deny not but that this acknowledgment of God's ancient kindness to himself in particular may be referred to the argument indefinitely set down in the former verse, and here added as an application thereof; for, having indefinitely noted how the death of God's favourites was precious in his sight, here he giveth instance thereof in himself, and saith, I am God's servant, and my death was precious to him; for 'he loosed my bonds.' This reference is not impertinent. But I take this for another distinct argument, rather than for an application or confirmation of the former.

There is in the original a word<sup>3</sup> premised, which is diversely expounded, because in Scripture it is diversely used, namely, as a note of attention, or observation, or demonstration, or asseveration, and translated, Behold, truly, I beseech thee. But in all the acceptations thereof it hath an emphasis; and

<sup>1</sup> Preciosior est unus sancti anima, quam infinite multitudines peccatorum.—*Jerome, Com. in Ps. cxliii.*

<sup>2</sup> See sec. 2.

<sup>3</sup> ὁδορρωταρον ὀθανατος, πειρας γαρ.—*Arist. Ethic.*, lib. iii. c. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Occasio non est danda Gentibus, ut nos merito reprehendant, quod quos vivere apud Deum dicimus, ut extinctos ac perditos lugcamus, &c.—*Cyprian, ser. 4, de Mortal.*

<sup>3</sup> וַיִּשָׁא et וַיִּשְׁאֵן est particula incitantis: affectum significat et impetum. Est semper in initio sententiae, per Aphe-resin וַיִּשְׁאֵן, quae semper postponitur.

here unquestionless it is used for emphasis' sake, as every of the other clauses are. For first, here is an apostrophe to God, 'O Lord.' 2. A note of asseveration, 'truly.' 3. An ingemination of the relation betwixt God and him, 'I am thy servant, I am thy servant.' 4. A calling to remembrance of his native condition, 'the son of thine handmaid.'

The former title whereby he sets out himself, 'servant,' doth signify both a condition and a disposition.<sup>1</sup> A 'servant in condition' is he that is under the authority and command of a master. A 'servant in disposition' is he that is willing to do anything for the good of another. Thus Christ, though in condition, he never were under the authority of any master on earth, yet is said to take on him 'the form of a servant,' Phil. ii. 7, and he did offices of a servant to his servants, John xiii. 4, &c., his disciples. St Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 19, where in regard of condition he professeth himself to be 'free from all men,' acknowledgeth himself in disposition to be 'servant to all men.' The prophet here intendeth both these, that as he is God's servant in condition, so he is also in disposition.

The doubling of this phrase thus, 'I am thy servant, I am thy servant,' is not a superfluous tautology, or an idle repetition of the same thing; for in sacred Scripture there is not a tittle in vain.<sup>2</sup>

Repetitions commonly have respect to the point repeated, or to the persons that do repeat it, and to whom it is repeated.

In regard of the point itself, a repeating<sup>3</sup> of it importeth—

1. The infallible truth of it, Gen. xli. 32.
2. The excellent matter of it, Ps. xxiv. 7-10.
3. The profitable use of it, Ps. cxxxvi. 1, 2, &c.
4. The absolute necessity of it, John iii. 3, 5; Luke xiii. 3, 5.

In regard of the person that repeateth the point, it importeth—

1. His assured persuasion, or rather knowledge of the truth and worth of the point. To shew that that which he uttered fell not suddenly or rashly

out of his mouth, but that advisedly, upon good and sure ground, he uttered it; even so as he dares stand to it, he repeats it again, Gal. i. 8, 9.

2. His desire that they that hear it or read it should give the more earnest heed to it, and not let it slip, Heb. ii. 1.

In regard of the person to whom a point is repeated it argueth—

1. Their need. Some through ignorance and dullness to conceive; others through carelessness and negligence in attending; others through weakness and slipperiness of memory; some one way, some another way, have need to have that which is delivered to them pressed and inculcated, Isa. xxviii. 10.

2. Their good. By repeating one and the same thing memory is helped, affection is wrought upon, and matters of moment are better minded, Phil. iii. 1.

The other title, 'Son of thine handmaid,' Exod. xxi. 4, sheweth the kind of condition and the continuance thereof.<sup>1</sup> For the kind, it hath reference to the law, which determined that children born of a servant should be the master's, even his servants by virtue of their birth. Hereby the prophet acknowledgeth that his mother was God's servant, and that he himself was born in God's house, in his church, and there trained up all his days, even from his birth, which noteth the continuance of his condition.

In this text is a declaration of the relation which was betwixt God and the prophet, wherein is set out—

1. The matter wherein that relation consisted, 'I am thy servant.'
2. The manner whereby it is expressed. Hereof are four branches:—
  1. An apostrophe, O Lord.
  2. An asseveration, Truly.
  3. An ingemination, 'I am thy servant, I am thy servant.'
  4. An intimation of the kind and cause thereof, 'The son of thine handmaid.'

The relation itself, which is here plainly expressed, demonstrateth that—

<sup>1</sup> *ἐκκορπισθῆς* verba. Et emptus est, et vermaculus est.—Aug. Enar. in Ps. hunc.

<sup>1</sup> Of several kinds of servants, see 'Domestical Duties,' on Eph. vi. 5, treat. 3, sec. 124.

<sup>2</sup> See sec. 107.

<sup>3</sup> Repetito confirmatio est; ut illud, Abraham, Abraham: et alibi, Ego sum, Ego sum qui deleo iniquitates tuas.—Aub. de Bero, M et, cap. 12.

I. Saints are God's servants.

The apostrophe, which is expressly directed to God, implieth a holy familiarity with God, whereof before on the 4th verse, see, 22, and on the 8th verse, see, 50.

The asseveration is a note of confidence, so as—

II. Saints may confidently profess that relation which God is pleased shall pass betwixt him and them.

The ingemination importeth an earnestness in that which he professeth, and giveth instance that—

III. Confidence in the interest which saints have in God maketh them earnest in pressing it.

The continuance of the mutual relation betwixt God and him, even from his birth, is added as a prop to his faith. Therefore—

IV. Faith is much strengthened by constant evidences of God's favour.

The express mention of his mother, which is for honour sake, sheweth that—

V. It is an honour to children to descend from pious parents.

#### Sec. 99. *Of saints being God's servants.*

I. *Saints are God's servants.* As this prophet here so styleth himself, so are the three great patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Exod. xxxii. 13; so also Moses, Num. xii. 7; Job, chap. i. 8; all the true prophets, Jer. vii. 25; the apostles, as Paul, Rom. i. 1; Peter, 2 Pet. i. 1; Jude, ver. 1; yea, and Christ himself, styled, Isa. xlii. 1.

Sundry are the respects wherein saints may truly and properly be termed God's servants.

1. As all creatures are, Ps. cxix. 91, being made, sustained, ordered, and governed by the Lord.

2. As many natural men, Jer. xxv. 9, being deputed by the Lord to special functions and services.

3. As many in the church, Mal. i. 6; Isa. xlii. 19, making profession of God to be their Lord.

4. As true, faithful professors, who do indeed take God for their Lord. In the three former respects (as God's creatures, as deputed to select functions by God, as professors of the name of God) others are servants of God as well as saints, but the fourth respect, which is the most honourable, profit-

able, and comfortable respect, is proper and peculiar to saints, and that two ways:—

1. By reason of God's affection to them.

2. By reason of their disposition to God.

1. God accounts them members of his house, and answerably affects them as of his household. In regard of such an affection he thus saith of Moses, 'My servant Moses is faithful in all my house,' Num. xii. 7. Yea, as united unto Christ, and in him adopted and accepted, he saith to saints as to Christ, 'Behold my servants, whom I uphold: mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth,' Isa. xlii. 1.

2. They are affected to the Lord as dutiful, faithful, grateful servants. A heathen monarch observed thus much, and thereupon saith, 'O Daniel, servant of the living God, whom thou servest continually,' Dan. vi. 20.

This relation thus taken affordeth matter of gratulation and direction to such as can truly and justly apply it to themselves.

Gratulation, by reason of the dignity of it.<sup>1</sup>

Direction, by reason of the duties that are thereupon expected.

1. It is here as a dignity expressed and made the ground of gratulation, and that not without cause; for though this title, servant, be in itself a mean title, yet in relation to God it is a high, an honourable title. The greatest nobleman in a kingdom thinks himself honoured with this title—the king's servant. But what are mortal monarchs to the immortal and incomprehensible King of kings? Not only patriarchs, kings, prophets, and apostles, but Christ the Son of God, thought himself dignified with this title, servant, in relation to God. It is, therefore, a noble service whereof David here saith to God, 'I am thy servant,' &c., and blessed Mary to the angel, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord.' Moses also and other saints were such servants. Neither is it any marvel that holy men were dignified with this title, whereas the Father thus speaketh to his Son, 'It is a great thing for thee

<sup>1</sup> Nobilis servitus de qua et David ad Deum loquitur, Ego servus, &c.; et beata Maria ad angelum, Ecce ancilla Domini. Hanc servitute habuit et Moyses, &c. Nec mirum quavis sanctos homines tamen Dei servos nobiliter appellari, cum per Esayam Pater loquatur ad Filium, Magnum tibi est vocari te puerum meum.—*Jerome, Com. in Tit. i.*

to be called my servant.<sup>1</sup> Such is the majesty, omnipotency, immutability, perpetuity, integrity, clemency, mercy, bounty, and excellency every way, of this Lord, as it nor will nor can repent any one to have any relation to him, or dependence upon him; which the royal prophet well understood when he said to this Lord, 'A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness,' Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

The particular dignities and prerogatives of the Lord's servants are such as these:—

1. They are all free, 1 Cor. vii. 22.
2. All the services which the Lord enjoineth are fair services, Ps. xix. 7. &c.; 1 John v. 3.
3. The Lord gives ability to do the work which he expects and exacts of us, Joel ii. 29; Phil. ii. 13.
4. He accepteth and approveth what he enableth his servants to do, Mat. xxv. 21; Job i. 8, 9.
5. He bountifully rewardeth every good thing. His wages are good and great, Mat. x. 42, xix. 29, and xxv. 21.
6. God's servants get favours even for others also, Job xlii. 8.
7. They are sure of safe protection from all hurtful things, and of sufficient provision of all needful good things, Isa. lxxv. 13, 14.
8. The Lord taketh care of his servants' seed, Ps. lxxix. 36.

2. This relation directeth us unto such duties as here follow:—

1. To honour our Lord, Mal. i. 6.
2. To obey him, Mat. viii. 9; Col. iii. 22.
3. To fear him with a holy trembling, Eph. vi. 5.
4. To be faithful to him, Num. xii. 7.
5. To do all that we do on duty, Luke xvii. 10.
6. To be no men-pleasers, Gal. i. 10.
7. To serve him only; not to serve Mammon, or any other master, save the Lord, Mat. vi. 24.

Sec. 100. *Of saints' confidence in God's mind to them, and theirs to God.*

II. *Saints may confidently profess that relation which God is pleased shall pass betwixt him and them.*<sup>2</sup> This

confidence is manifested sometimes in the acknowledgment of that part of the relation which is on man's part, and other times that which is on God's part. In this text that on man's part is professed: 'Truly I am thy servant.' So, where he saith, 'We are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hands,' Ps. xcv. 7. People and sheep are notes of relation on man's part. So are clay, and work of God's hands, where the prophet saith, 'We are the clay, and the work of thy hands,' Isa. lxiv. 8. On God's part he saith, 'O Lord, thou art our Father, and thou our potter.' To like purpose are other like notes of relation on God's part with confidence professed thus, 'Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation,' Ps. lxxxix. 26; 'Thou art my King, O God,' Ps. xlv. 4; 'Thou, O Lord, art my glory,' Ps. iii. 3. In these and other like places, though the note of asseveration, truly, **NON**, is not expressed, yet the manner of expressing the notes of relation, on the one and the other part, import much confidence.

These and such other relations betwixt God and man give assurance of God's gracious acceptance and favour. If God meant not to deal with us, as a father with children, as a husband with his wife, as a king with subjects, as a master with servants, as a shepherd with sheep, as a potter with pots, (for all these and other like notes of relation betwixt God and us are expressed in Scripture,) would God have suffered such relations to be betwixt him and us? They are not complimentary and mere titular phrases, but expressions of true, real unions and communions.

Take notice here of the ground of true holy boldness and confidence. Wisely and diligently observe how God offers himself unto thee, what bond of relation he suffereth to pass betwixt him and thee. As saints in former times have done, do thou in thy time. Plead them before God. Confidently plead them, to sharpen thy prayer, to strengthen thy faith. Say to God, Thou art, O Lord, truly thou art my God, my king, my father, my master, my maker, my shepherd, &c. And, on the other side, I am of thy people and of thy flock, thy child, thy servant, the work of thy hands. Behold thy people, which have of old been called thy people.<sup>1</sup> These sure

<sup>1</sup> It is strange that Dr Gouge should have followed Jerome in such a mis-quotation and mis-application of Isa. xlix. 6.—Ed. See. 98.

<sup>1</sup> *Respicias populum tuum, qui quondam tuus est appellatus populus.—Jerome Comment. lib. xvii. in Isa. lxxiv.*

grounds of faith will enlarge thine heart and open thy mouth, and embolden thee both to pray to God, and to expect from God what thou prayest for.

That thou mayest do this with the more steadfastness of faith, search thine heart, examine thy disposition: try how thou standest affected towards God. If thou have the mind of a child, a servant, a creature, a sheep, towards God, thou mayest rest upon it: God hath an answerable mind to thee. Yea, because God hath the mind of a father and master to thee, thou hast an answerable mind to him. The reflection of his respect to thee on thy heart, worketh respect in thee towards him.

See. 101. *Of saints' earnestness in pressing their interest in God.*

III. *Confidence in the interest which saints have in God, maketh them earnest in pressing it.*<sup>1</sup> It maketh them again and again to press the same thing, which is an undoubted evidence of great ardency. Did not the fire of a zealous spirit even flame out of the mouth of him that doth thus redouble a like relation before God? 'Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer.' Isa. lxiii. 16. The like is manifested by the multiplication of several words to the same sense, thus, 'Behold and visit this vine: and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted: and the branch which thou madest strong for thyself.' Ps. lxxx. 14, 15. Vine, vineyard, branch, import one and the same thing.

Such confidence as is rightly grounded on an assured interest in God, persuadeth a man's heart that God cannot suffer him to call and cry upon him, and not hear him. Therefore if God at first hear not, he will not presently give over, but rather cry the more earnestly and instantly till the Lord do hear him. Indeed, they that know no title that they can make to God, nor believe any interest they have in him, may soon be driven away: as Saul, who, when the Lord answered him not, 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 7, presently inquired after a witch. But they that well knew their interest in God took another course. When God seemed to be angry against their prayer, Ps. lxxx. 4, &c., they humbly expostulate the case

with God: they press the former favours that God shewed to them, and that title which they had in him, and thereupon once and again most earnestly they pray that God would cause his face to shine upon them, resting on this, that they shall be saved.

By that ground of faith (whereof in the former section) labour to be strengthened in faith. Get confidence in God; and that by considering, as what he is in himself, a potent, prudent, faithful, merciful God; so what he is to thee, thy God, thy king, thy Father, &c. And give evidence of this thy confidence, by stirring up thy spirit to depend on him, who gives so just cause to make thee depend on him. Oft and seriously meditate on those grounds; and when thou art before God, whether it be in humiliation or gratulation, call them to mind, press them again and again. Imitate the worthy patterns that in this case are prescribed unto us in God's word. If thus with understanding we do inwardly in our souls, or outwardly with our tongues, inculcate our right, title, and interest in God's word, urging the same again and again, thereby our dull spirits will be much quickened, our blunt prayers much sharpened, and our weak faith much strengthened—especially if with patience we can rest upon God. Saints of old, by their patient expectation and steadfast confidence, attained what was promised. If therefore to trust confidently be the way to receive, we also may so receive.<sup>1</sup>

See. 102. *Of the vigour which is preserved in faith by the constancy of God's favour.*

IV. *Faith is much strengthened by constant evidences of God's favour.*<sup>2</sup> Herewith did he support his faith that said to God, 'Thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breast. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.' Ps. xxii. 9, 10. 'Thou art my trust from my youth. By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out from my mother's bowels,' Ps. lxxi. 5, 6. It was not only the disposition of Obadiah towards God, but also the evidence that thereby he had of God's affection

<sup>1</sup> Acciperunt repromissiones expectando atque confidendo quod acciperent. Si igitur confidere sit accipere, possumus sic accipere.—*Chrys.*, hom. 23, in *Heb.* xi.

<sup>2</sup> See. 93.

<sup>1</sup> See. 98.

towards him, that made him with confidence say to Elijah, 'I fear the Lord from my youth,' 1 Kings xviii. 12.

By long continuance of ancient favour many demonstrations are given of a fast, fixed, and unremovable affection. So as if, by reason of temptations, one or more evidences should be questioned, yet others would remain to uphold faith, and to keep it from an utter languishing, and a total falling away. As when a house is supported by many pillars, though some be taken away, yet by the support of them which remain, the house will stand.

1. Be admonished hereby, O parents,<sup>1</sup> to initiate your children betimes, and from the cradle, yea, from the womb, to dedicate them to the Lord, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, so soon as they are capable of instruction, that when they are grown even unto manhood, they may on all occasions, with much comfort and strong confidence, say in the same sense that the prophet here doth, 'I am the son of thine handmaid,' being born under the covenant, and having in their infancy received the seal of the covenant, and from their childhood known the Holy Scriptures, being taught when they were tender, and thereby brought from their youth to fear the Lord. It is a glorious and blessed prerogative to be born a servant in God's house.<sup>2</sup> This is no slavish condition, but the best freedom and most happy immunity that possibly can be. Such as are born servants in God's house, are by virtue of that their birth sons, and free from the instant of that their birth.<sup>3</sup> Christ's servant, and the Lord's freeman, are reciprocal terms; either may be said of the other. Christ's servant is the Lord's freeman, and the Lord's freeman is Christ's servant, 1 Cor. vii. 22. A good inducement this is to provoke parents to suffer this word of exhortation.

2. Be ye also, O children, exhorted and persuaded to yield yourselves pliable, from the time that you have any capacity, to the good instruction of your parents, that by your continuing to grow in grace answerably

to the means which, by the divine providence, have been afforded you, you may, with the greater comfort and stronger confidence, both in time of humiliation, when, for preventing or averting some judgment, or obtaining or regaining some blessing, you pour forth your souls to God; or in time of gratulation for some judgment removed, or some blessing bestowed, you enlarge your hearts and open your mouths; you may say to God, 'I am the son of thine handmaid, and thou hast been my God from my mother's womb.' Take heed that, being born in God's house, and by your parent, the son of his handmaid, you become not a bond-slave, and have the flesh, a bond-woman, for your mother. They that serve the flesh in the lusts thereof are such. What can such expect but the doom denounced against the bond-woman and her son, which was this, 'Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman,' 1 Gal. iv. 30, a woeful doom, for such as are born in God's house, to be so cast out, thereby they may know that they have nothing in common with the true sons of God. Nothing, I say, in regard of those spiritual privileges which belong to God's free-born children. So walk, therefore, O children that are born in the church, so carry yourselves all your days, as you may on all occasions say to the Lord, 'I am the son of thine handmaid.'

#### Sec. 103. *Of children's honour by pious parents.*

V. *It is an honour to children to descend from pious parents.*<sup>2</sup> This is true in relation to ancient progenitors, for it was a great honour to the Jews in all succeeding ages that they descended from the pious patriarchs. But the nearer such parents are, the more honourable it is to children; most of all honourable when their immediate parents, from whose loins, and out of whose womb they proceed, are pious. Of such a one the prophet here speaketh, 'I am the son of thine handmaid.' For, questionless, he here calleth his mother God's 'handmaid,' as he called himself God's 'servant,' in a spiritual respect, in regard of God's grace to her and in her. Such were Solomon's parents, of whom for honour's

<sup>1</sup> Of parents' duty in this kind, see 'Domestical Duties,' treat. vi. sec. 4, 17, 37.

<sup>2</sup> οἰκόντροφ.—Verma.

<sup>3</sup> Qui hominis servus est, liber est Deo, et qui hominibus liber est, servus est Christi: ambo ergo unum sunt.—Jerome, *Comment.*, 1 Cor. vii.

<sup>1</sup> Ejice ancillam hinc et filium ejus. Discat, inquit, jam quod nihil commune habebit filius ancillæ cum filio mæo Isaac.—*Chrys.* hom. 46, in Gen. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 98.

sake, he maketh frequent mention, Prov. iv. 3, and xxxi. 1; 1 Kings viii. 17; such was, as Lois the grandmother, so Eunice the mother, of Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 5.

Nothing, in truth, can make any more honourable than piety. Whatsoever men's outward condition be in this world, though never so mean, yet if they excel in virtue, they are most honourable in God's eye. What man before God more noble than Peter, who was but a poor fisherman? What woman more illustrious than blessed Mary, who is set out to be a carpenter's wife?<sup>1</sup> Pious persons for birth are born of God. For dignities, they are God's favourites, of God's court, the most honourable therein; they are the spouse of his Son. For revenues, the exchequer of God's treasures is always open for them to have out of it his most precious jewels; yea, they are the true heirs of this world and of the world to come.

1. Such parents as desire that their children should all their days make an honourable mention of them, let them here take notice of the only right course to have their desire accomplished. Let them so walk before their children as they may have sure evidences that they are God's servants: that when children make mention of their father before the Lord, they may have cause to say of him, as Solomon did of his father, 'Thy servant my father.' 1 Kings viii. 25, and of their mother, 'Thy handmaid,' Ps. lxxxvi. 16. For a child to style himself the son of a duke and duchess, earl and countess, lord and lady, or any other like, is not in truth such an honour as this, 'Son of God's servant and handmaid.' By this, poor, mean, despised parents in this world may make their children honourable, and may make their own names honourable to their children.

2. Such children as would have just cause not vaingloriously to brag, but divinely to glory in their parents, let them here know what kind of parents do give that just cause. If, indeed, their father be God's servant, and their mother God's handmaid, let them not be ashamed of them because they be poor, of mean condition, not esteemed in this world, but heartily thank God that they are born of such

parents as may give them occasion to say, I am the child of God's servant and of God's handmaid. It is a hard task to persuade most children heremito. But they that know God, and the dignities and immunities of his servants, will, without all question, yield to the truth and equity hereof.

Sec. 104. *Of the resolution and instructions of the last clause of the sixteenth verse.*

Ver. 16. *Thou hast loosed my bonds.*

The fourth reason<sup>1</sup> which stirred up the prophet to give public thanks to God, was the kindness which God had done to him. That kindness was a gracious deliverance from a grievous distress, thus expressed—

'Thou hast loosed my bonds.' The argument may be thus framed—

They whose bonds thou, O Lord, hast loosed, are bound to praise thee;

But thou hast loosed my bonds;

Therefore I am bound to praise thee.

Thus these words have a relation to the principal duty promised in this psalm.

They may also have an immediate reference to the other part of this verse, and that as an effect following from the cause. The Lord accounted him his servant, and therefore loosed his bonds. To make this reference the better discerned, some join this part of the verse with the former in one entire sentence, which they express in form of a petition, thus, 'I beseech thee, O Lord, seeing I am thy servant, I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid, loose my bonds.'<sup>2</sup> But the mood and tense<sup>3</sup> whereby this last clause is expressed admitteth not the form of petition.

And the very matter whereabout he now is, namely, gratulation, sheweth it rather to be a profession of a former, than a supplication for a future deliverance.

Besides, the inference of the 17th verse immediately on this clause doth demonstrate that he speaketh of a thing past, a favour done, and succour received; and that mention is here made thereof as

<sup>1</sup> Summa apud Deum est nobilitas clarum esse virtutibus. Quid apud Deum in viris nobilibus Petro, qui piscator et pauper fuit? Quid in feminis beata Maria illustrius, quæ sponsa fabri describitur?—*Jerome ad Celant, de Instit. Matris fem.*

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Obsecro, Jehovah, cum ego sim servus tuus, sim servus tuus, filius ancillæ tuæ, solveres vincula mea.—*Tremel. et Jun.*

<sup>4</sup> תַּחַת. Indicat, præter-perfect, solvisti.

of the cause of praising God. For if the question should be asked why mention is here made of loosening his bonds, the 17th verse giveth a ready answer, 'I will offer,' &c. As if it had been more fully expressed, Because the Lord hath loosed my bonds, therefore I will offer a sacrifice of praise.

Wherefore, to take the words as our English hath truly and properly translated them, thus, 'Thou hast loosed my bonds;' the word translated *loosed*, (פָּתַח,) doth properly signify *to open*; and thus it is diversely applied, as to the parts of one's body, 'mouth,' Ezek. xxxiii. 22; 'eyes,' 1 Kings viii. 29; 'ears,' &c., Isa. l. 5. To the earth, and that when ordinarily it openeth itself to receive rain, or seed, chap. xlv. 8; or extraordinarily, as when it opened itself to devour 'Dathan and his associates,' Ps. cvi. 17; to the 'engraving of stones,' Exod. xxviii. 9; 'metals or any like thing,' 1 Kings vii. 36; to 'doors,' Isa. xxvi. 2; 'gates,' 2 Kings xv. 16; 'treasures,' and such like, Deut. xxviii. 12; Gen. xli. 56; to 'the drawing out of a sword,' Ps. xxxvii. 14; and to the undoing, opening, and loosening of such things as are bound. Thus this word is used to express the undoing of a girdle wherewith a man is girt, Isa. v. 27; the opening of a sack that is tied, Gen. xlv. 11; and the loosening of cords and chains wherewith one is bound, Job xxx. 11, and xii. 8. Where Nebuzaradan saith to Jeremiah, 'I loose thee from the chains,' &c., Jer. xl. 4, this word is used. In this sense is it here used. Afflictions and calamities are as bonds, cords, and chains which fast tie and bind men, which girt and gall, pinch and pain them, yea, and oft strangle and kill them; and in these respects called bonds, as in this and many other places, where the very word that is here is used in the same sense, Ps. cvii. 14; Eccles. vii. 26; Isa. xxviii. 22, and lii. 2; Jer. ii. 20, and xxx. 8; Nah. i. 13. Yea, because death holdeth men down as fast bound so as they cannot stir, it is said to have cords, as was before noted on ver. 3, sec. 15; and when one is delivered from death, the grave is said, in the word of this text, to be 'loosed or opened,' Ezek. xxxvii. 13.

This phrase, then, 'thou hast loosed my bonds,' is metaphorical. It implieth two things:

1. That he was in sore and grievous afflictions, wherewith he was as it were bound, as a man that

is taken by robbers and pirates, or by enemies, and fast bound by ropes, chains, or other like bonds. Thus Jeremiah, chap. xl. 1, among other Jews that were taken captives by the Babylonians, was bound.

2. That the Lord delivered him from those afflictions, which deliverance was a kind of loosening those bonds, so as they continued not to bind him as before. Thus Nebuzaradan said to Jeremiah, 'I loose thee this day from the chains which were upon thine hand,' chap. xl. 4.

The occasion of mentioning this deliverance is to convince his soul of the equity of that which he was now in doing, to praise the Lord.

Thus we have a profession of a great deliverance.

This may be considered two ways:

1. Simply, in and by itself.
2. Relatively, in and with reference to the occasion thereof.

In the former consideration, one thing is implied, another expressed.

1. The thing implied is, that he was in great distress. The mention of bonds, together with the loosening of them, importeth that bonds were on him; he was bound with them.

2. The thing expressed pointeth at—

1. The author, or deliverer, thou.
2. The kind of deliverance, hast loosed.

The reference hereof is partly immediate, to the very next words; partly remote, to the words further off.

The immediate reference sets it down as an effect of that relation which was betwixt God and him. He was God's servant, therefore God loosed his bonds.

The remote reference expresseth it as a cause of his praising God. 'God loosed his bonds,' therefore he would praise God.

So also doth the immediate inference of the 17th verse: 'Because thou, O Lord, hast loosed my bonds, I will offer praise to thee.'

The thing implied, bonds, intimateth that—

I. Saints may fall into inextricable perplexities; even such as they fall into who are bound with cords and chains, and know not how to unloose them. Hereof before on ver. 3, sec. 16.



The author acknowledged to be his deliverer, *thou*, giveth proof that—

II. God is a deliverer from distress.

III. Deliverances are to be ascribed to God. Of both these before. Of the former on ver. 6, sec. 35, 36; of the latter, ver. 8, sec. 51.

The kind of deliverance, hast loosed, giveth evidence that—

IV. God can deliver out of inextricable straits. Hereof before on ver. 6, sec. 39–41, and on ver. 8, sec. 52.

The immediate reference importeth that—

V. God taketh especial care of his servants.

This prophet was God's servant, and God loosed his bonds. Yea, the inference importeth that therefore, even because he was his servant, he loosed them.

The remote reference and immediate inference, imply that—

VI. They that are delivered from distress are especially bound to praise the Lord.

Sec. 105. *Of God's respect to his servants.*

V. *God taketh especial care of his servants.*<sup>1</sup> As here under a metaphor he is said to loose his bonds, so elsewhere his care is in other phrases set down, thus—

'The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants,' Ps. xxxiv. 22.

'He delivereth his servants from the hurtful sword,' Ps. cxlv. 10.

'He revengeth the blood of his servants,' Ps. lxxix. 10.

'He sent plagues among them that dealt craftily with his servants,' Ps. cv. 25, &c.

'He hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants,' Ps. xxxv. 27.

As the affection and respect which he beareth to them, which moveth him to make them his favourites;<sup>2</sup> so the honour which he bringeth to himself thereby, moveth him so and so to deal with his servants. This reason God himself thus expresseth and presseth, 'For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain,' &c., Isa. xlvi. 9, 11. 'For mine own sake, even for mine own sake will I do it. For how should my name be polluted?' Ezek. xxxix. 25, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 95.

They who have assured evidence that they are God's servants, have good ground to 'cast their care on him who careth for them,' 1 Pet. v. 7. And in their distress to remember this their condition, and with the remembrance thereof to support their faith, and that by pleading it before God, as he who said, 'Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; save me for thy mercies' sake,' Ps. xxxi. 16. 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant,' Ps. cxliii. 2. 'Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word,' Ps. cxix. 17. 'Destroy all them that afflict my soul; for I am thy servant,' Ps. cxliii. 12. Believe God's word, and then say to God, 'Remember the word unto thy servant,' Ps. cxix. 49. See more hereof before, sec. 96.

Sec. 106. *Of their forwardness to praise God who have been succoured by God.*

VI. *They that are delivered from distresses are especially bound to praise the Lord.*<sup>1</sup> This only is in special enjoined to them, Ps. cvii. 2, &c.; and where it is enjoined, this pathetical exclamation of desire is as the staff of a divine hymn four several times repeated, 'Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wondrous works to the children of men,' Ps. ciii. 1. On this ground doth the psalmist vehemently incite his soul to this duty. And it hath been the constant practice of God's servants, after God hath delivered them from danger and loosed their bonds, to praise him: as Moses and Miriam, Exod. xv. 1, &c.; Barak and Deborah, Judges v. 1, &c.; David, 2 Sam. xxii. 1, &c.; Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xxi. 26; Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 9; and many others.

I. Praise is that which God expecteth for his kindness in delivering us; for saith he, 'I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me,' Ps. l. 15; so as if any just occasion can be given for performing this duty, this is especially a most just occasion.<sup>2</sup> Yea, this being the end why God delivereth thee, it lieth on thee as a debt, a most due debt which thou art to pay. The psalmist there-

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Prophetica dicit, immola Deo sacrificium laudis. Et cur hæc faciat adject, quoniam eripuit animam meam de morte.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. lv.*

fore where he speaketh of praising God, gives this reason thereof, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death,' Ps. lvi. 12, 13.

2. Distress makes men to call upon God. If upon deliverance from distress they are not careful to praise God, they shew that they perform duties of piety for their own advantage; and give just cause to suspect, that if it were not to reap benefit to themselves thereby, they would perform no duty at all to God.

To satisfy God's expectation, and to testify that respect you owe him, and bear to him, O ye kingdoms and nations that have had those bonds loosed, whereby you have been bound by your enemies, render that unto the Lord which is most due, solemn, hearty thanks and praise. Do so, ye countries and people that have been bound and pinched with the bonds of dearth and famine. And ye, O cities and societies that have had the deadly bonds of the plague, and other contagious sicknesses (wherewith multitudes lie still bound) loosed. Ye also that have been in prison, but are now loosed, praise the Lord. Ye that have gone forth against your enemies, and having been compassed about by them before and behind, (as Abijah and his armies were, 2 Chron. xiii. 13.) are loosed and freed, be forward to perform your bounden duty, praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, ye that go down to the sea in ships, and have there been bound with vehement and violent storms, and in great hazard of death, but are loosed. Especially if ye have been taken by pirates, made bond-slaves, bound to galleys, or bound in dungeons, and are loosed. Yea, and ye principal debtors, or sureties, that have been fast bound to hard and cruel creditors, whereby your whole estate hath been in hazard, and you have feared your own, your wives', and children's utter undoing, but are loosed from those bonds, offer to the Lord your sacrifice of thanksgiving. And ye, O women, who have been bound with the strait and painful bonds of travail, which are loosed, and whereof you are eased. All ye also that have been hard girt with the bonds of the stone, the strangury, the gout, the colic, or any other painful makdy, or have been fast tied to your beds with the coils of any sickness, and are loosed, give thanks unto the Lord. Whosoever ye be that

have with any manner of bonds been bound, say unto the Lord, 'Thou hast loosed my bonds;' and as you say it, so know the end why ye ought to say it, namely, to convince your souls of the equity of giving thanks to God, and to provoke them to do it the more readily and cheerfully.<sup>1</sup> When you are about to render solemn praise to God, do as this prophet did, think of your bonds which God hath loosed. Meditation thereon will much inflame your holy zeal of praising God. When the thought of your bonds which God hath loosed cometh to your mind, then withal inquire (as Ahasuerus did when he heard of the kindness done to him by Mordecai) what hath been rendered unto the Lord? what is to be rendered to him? This will make thee, with such a mind as the prophet did, use these words to the Lord, 'Thou hast loosed my bond, I will offer to thee a sacrifice of thanksgiving.'

Sec. 107. *Of the resolution of the three last verses.*

Ver. 17. *I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.*

Ver. 18. *I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people,*

Ver. 19. *In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.*

In these three last verses of this psalm the prophet remeth to his profession of rendering praise unto the Lord, wherein some things that were before set down are repeated, and other things are added thereto. For the better discerning whereof, take notice of two main points expressed therein:—

1. A protestation to praise the Lord himself.
2. A provocation to others so to do.

In his protestation we have—

1. The matter thereof.
2. The motive thereof.

The matter consisteth of two duties:—

1. Giving thanks to God—'I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.'
2. Calling upon God—'And will call upon the name of the Lord.'

The motive is taken from his vow, where we have to consider—

<sup>1</sup> Unusquisque nostrum excitet et exhortetur animam suam, et dicat ei Benedic anima mea Dominum, &c.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. cii.*

1. The general matter thereof—'I will pay my vows unto the Lord.'

2. The particular manner of performing it.

The manner is set out by two circumstances,—

1. The time, now.

2. The place; which is largely described, and that—

1. Indefinitely—'In the presence of his people.'

2. Determinately, by a description of the place where God's people met. This is here described—

1. By the relation it had to God—'In the courts of the Lord's house.'

2. By the situation of it—'In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.'

The provocation to others is in the very last clause of all thus expressed, 'Praise ye the Lord.'

The first duty in the protestation was before set down, ver. 13, 'I will take the cup of salvation.' Here it is in other words repeated, thus: 'I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.'

The second duty is here repeated in the very same words wherein it was expressed before, ver. 13, thus: 'And I will call upon the name of the Lord.'

The matter of the motive, and the amplification thereof by the time and by the place, as it is indefinitely set down, are all, word for word, repeated in this 18th verse, as they were before expressed in the 14th verse, thus: 'I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.'

The determinate description of the place in the 19th verse by the relation it hath to God and by the situation of it,—thus, 'In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem,'—is for substance the same that was noted before in the latter end of the 14th and 18th verses.

Concerning these repetitions, we may not think that he which used them used them in vain.<sup>1</sup> He was guided by that divine Spirit, which would not suffer the least tittle to be in vain. By repetitions good doctrine are fast fixed in men's minds. Besides other ends before noted<sup>2</sup> for repeating of one and the same thing, whether in the same or differing words and phrases, this is a principal one, to testify and express the more lively, how deeply the soul is

affected with such and such a thing. Fit and not affected repetitions are clear expressions of deep affections; yea, they are also forcible incitations to incense holy passion in him that useth them, and in them that hear or read them so used. These are the ends why rhetoricians have invented figures of all manner of repetitions, as—

1. By repeating the same words (*ἰπυζωζῆς*) immediately together in the same sentence, as in the verse before, 'I am thy servant, I am thy servant;' and in the psalm before this, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,' &c., Ps. cxv. 1.

2. By repeating the same (*ἀναῖπυζωζῆς*) in the end of one sentence and beginning of the next, thus: 'Sing unto the Lord with the harp: with the harp, and the voice of a psalm,' Ps. xeviii. 5.

3. By repeating the same (*ἀναζωζῆς*) in the beginnings of several sentences, thus: 'Bless the Lord, O house of Israel. Bless the Lord, O house of Aaron,' &c., Ps. cxxxv. 19, 20.

4. By repeating the same (*ἰπυζωζῆς*) in the ends of several sentences, as where every verse of a psalm endeth with this clause, 'His mercy endureth for ever,' Ps. cxxxvi.

5. By repeating the same (*ἰπαναλήψης*) in the beginning and in the end, as where the same psalm beginneth and endeth with this clause, 'O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!' Ps. viii. 1, 9.

6. By repeating the same (*ἰπάνωδός*) in the beginning, midst, and end, thus: 'Sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises unto our King, sing praises,' Ps. xlvii. 6.

Sec. 108. *Of a soul so ravished with God's praises as it cannot be satisfied in setting them out.*

By the repetitions noted in the close of this psalm the prophet manifesteth a divine passion, (*πάθος, affectus concitatus*.) through a deep apprehension of God's favour and success shewed unto him; wherewith he was so ravished as he could not be satisfied in setting it out, nor thought that he could ever say enough thereof. Wherefore he loves to speak of it again and again, and oft to declare his purpose thereof, sometimes in some other words, and sometimes in the very same. Hereby he giveth instance, that,

<sup>1</sup> Bonorum repetitio doctrinam in animabus bene stabilit.  
—*Chrys. Serm., de fide et lege.*

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 98.

A deep and due apprehension of God's mercies makes a soul unsatisfied in setting forth God's praises. The divine hymns that were penned by such as did indeed deeply ponder on God's mercies are evident demonstrations thereof. Among other the book of Psalms; and in that book the *xlvi.*, *ciii.*, *cvii.*, *cxxxv.*, *cxxxvi.*, *cxlviii.*, *cxix.*, and *cl.* psalms.

God's mercies, the more they are pondered are the more admired, especially when the greatness, freeness, seasonableness of them, and other like circumstances, together with our unworthiness, and therewithal the need that we have thereof, the sweetness that we taste, and benefit that we reap thereby, are duly and deeply weighed. They are like a bottomless sea, which, the further it is sounded, the deeper it appears to be; or like to the bright sun, which, the more it is gazed upon, the more it dazzleth the eye. Yea, further, God's mercies are so linked together, as when we have occasion to meditate on one, many of them instantly present themselves to the view of our mind; as he that in a clear night lifteth up his eyes to see one star, hath millions on a sudden in his sight; or as he that in a bank of a deep river maketh a gut for a little water to pass through, maketh way for a flood to follow after. Thus was this prophet moved a little before to say, 'All his benefits are upon me.' A pious mind will hereupon say, I will daily rise, I will go to church, I will sing praise in the morning, I will do so again in the evening.<sup>1</sup> In my house will I do so again and again, daily offering up sacrifices of praise.

What now may be thought of such as having great and just occasion to set out the praises of the Lord with the uttermost of their power, find in themselves no heat of affection to do the same; and thereupon or wholly omit the duty, or do it so coldly as they were as good not do it at all? Surely such backwardness to perform this duty, such coldness and deadness in performing it, as is in most men, betrayeth an ill disposition, a base affection. The fire that descends from heaven hath not fallen upon the altar of their heart. If it had it would, as the

fire which fell on Elijah's altar, 1 Kings xviii. 38, lick up the Lethæan waters and sluggish slime that lieth about their heart, and soon kindle and inflame their sacrifice of praise, and 'turn it to ashes,' Ps. xx. 3; that is, God's Spirit would stir up them with such cheerfulness to perform this duty, as God would most graciously accept the same. Great cause there is much to complain of men's want of zeal to, and in performance of, this duty. For of those whose 'bonds are loosed,' if their disposition should be observed, they would be found like the lepers whom Christ cured, Luke xvii. 17, nine to one to go away with their cures without returning back to give glory to God; and of those who do return back, though such a number of them should be gathered together as came through the Red Sea, even six hundred thousand who sang praise to God, yet scarce two in such a number would be found, as among them only Caleb and Joshua, inflamed with such a fervent spirit as this prophet had, so ravished with God's favours, so unsatisfied with giving praise to him. That small, cold thanks which most give, much provoketh God to repent what he hath done, and to withhold his helping hand for the time to come. Due notice is to be taken hereof, that we may be humbled for what is past, and be more quickened for the time to come.

As for you whose understandings are enlightened and judgments convinced about the equity, not of the duty only, that thanks is to be given to God, but also of the manner of doing it, with life, with spirit, with zeal, 'with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind,' Luke x. 27, (for praise is an especial fruit of love: as God, therefore, is to be loved, so is he to be praised), rouse up your spirits, come with souls ravished, with hearts inflamed to perform this duty, as he that said, 'My heart is prepared, O God, my heart is prepared: I will sing and give praise. Awake up my glory,' &c., Ps. lvii. 7, &c. Zeal is not more requisite for any other duty than for praising God, neither can the spirit be more quickened up in the performing of any other duty than this, if it be rightly performed. Praising of God is a spiritual mirth, and words of mirth are in Scripture used to set it out, as: 'To 'sing unto the Lord,' Exod. xv. 1; 'to sing aloud, to make a joyful noise

<sup>1</sup> Surgam quotidie, pergam ad ecclesiam, dicam unum hymnum matutinum, alium vespertinum, tertium aut quartum in domo mea, quotidie sacrificio sacrificium laudis.—Aug. *Enar.* in Ps. xlv.

unto God,' Ps. lxxxi. 1: 'to be glad and rejoice in God,' Ps. ix. 2. And all instruments of music, rites, and gestures of mirth were of old wont to be used in praising God, Ps. lxxxi. 2, &c., cl. 1, &c. Now mirth, and such things as tend thereto, are effectual means to quicken the spirit. Elisha, therefore, being somewhat heavy in spirit and vexed in soul by reason of the abominations of the times wherein he lived, when he was moved to prophesy, that he might be the more revived and quickened thereto, he said, 'Bring me a minstrel,' 2 Kings iii. 15. It is then evident that praise must be given to God with a quick and zealous spirit.

That we may with such a spirit perform this duty, take a view of such things as in this very psalm are noted to incense the heart and ravish the soul of this prophet.

1. In his distress he called on God, ver. 4, and that most earnestly. The more earnest men are in praying, the more zealous they will be in giving thanks for that which they have prayed for.

2. In his distress he vowed, ver. 14, to give praise to God. A vow is of special force to incite a man heartily to perform that which he hath vowed.

3. He believed that God heard his prayer, ver. 1, 2. They that believe that God hears their prayers cannot but hold themselves much bound to testify all possible thankfulness.

4. He keeps his distress in mind and memory, ver. 3. So long as a man's mind is fixed on his danger and distress, his heart remains on fire with desire of gratitude.

5. He was well instructed in God's goodness, ver. 5, which doth most of all enlarge a man's heart unto all gratefulness.

6. He acknowledged God to be his deliverer, ver. 6-8, whereby he saw himself so engaged to God as he could not but acknowledge all thanks to be most due unto him.

7. His love was settled on God, ver. 1. Nothing can more inflame zeal than love.

8. He sets God always before him, ver. 9. The presence of him that doth a kindness doth more and more *egg* a man on to praise him.

9. He remembered his own weakness, ver. 10, 11, in making question of God's promises, whereby he

is moved the more to bless God for bringing that to pass whereof he doubted.

10. He observed that his death was precious in God's sight, ver. 15, and is induced thereby to have God's name in high esteem, and to praise him with the uttermost of his power.

11. He was assured of the mutual relation betwixt God and himself, ver. 16, which obliged him the more to God, and made him the more fervent in praising God.

12. By this benefit all God's benefits came to his mind, ver. 12, which much increased the heavenly fire of zeal in him.

13. He knew nothing to render by way of satisfaction to God, ver. 12, therefore he is the more stirred up to praise him.

14. He useth outward rites to quicken his spirit the more, ver. 13. No marvel then that he is so full of life in performing this duty.

15. He goeth to the courts of the Lord's house, where God's people were assembled together, ver. 19 —an especial means to quicken his spirit.

16. He provokes others to praise God, ver. 19, and thereby incites himself the more to that duty.

Sec. 109. *Of expressing the same thing in differing phrases.*

The first branch of the repetition of the prophet's protestation concerneth the principal duty here promised, thus expressed,

'I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.'

Though the prophet for subsistence of matter intends no more than he did before, ver. 13, yet the different manner of expressing the same affordeth some other useful instructions, which, that we may the better discern, let us take a view of the different phrases.

1. What he styled before, 'cup of salvations,' here he termeth, 'sacrifice of thanksgiving.'

2. Where before he said, 'I will take,' or lift up, here he saith, 'I will offer up.'

This latter manner of expressing his mind is the more plain and perspicuous, and serveth as a commentary to the former, in which respect it is not in vain, but to very good purpose, added.

In and by this pattern a useful rule for repeating one and the same thing in different words is set out,

which is, In the latter place to use such words and phrases as are in themselves more easy, and better known than the former, and which may give some light for a better understanding of the former :<sup>1</sup> for why are phrases added to phrases in and about the same thing but for illustration's sake, to make the point more perspicuous? That, therefore, which is added for this end must be more clear and evident, otherwise multiplication of words and phrases is idle and absurd.

Sec. 110. *Of offering a sacrifice of praise.*

Where the prophet saith, 'I will offer,' he useth a word that signifieth to slay. (אֹבֵחַ) but is most usually applied to the slaying of beasts or birds for feasts or sacrifices: a noun, therefore, derived from that verb is here and in many other places put for a 'sacrifice.' Our English, as well as other tongues, can well express this derivation thus, 'I will sacrifice the sacrifice of thanks,' (זֶבַח אוֹבֵחַ). The express relation of this oblation to God in this phrase, 'to thee,' (לְךָ) importeth a kind of donation, that thereby something was given to God. The attribute of 'thanksgiving' distinguisheth the kind of sacrifice. The word signifieth 'confession,' תְּרוּרָה, and it is applied sometimes to man's sins, and sometimes to God's properties and works. Joshua useth this word where he saith to Achan, 'Make confession to God,' Josh. vii. 19, (תְּנֵנוּ לַיהוָה) meaning confession of sin. And the psalmist useth this very word where he saith to God, 'I will publish with the voice of confession,' (or thanksgiving), 'and tell of all thy wondrous works,' Ps. xxvi. 7, (בְּקוֹל) (תְּרוּרָה). In this sense this word is oft used. That staff of the psalm of praise which is four several times repeated, by this word doth set out praise and thanksgiving to God, thus, 'Let men confess before the Lord his goodness, Ps. cvii. 8, 15, 21, 31, (יִזְכְּרוּ לַיהוָה חַסְדּוֹ, Confiteantur Domino, &c., vet. transl.) Hereupon that sacrifice, which was offered up when men recounted and acknowledged God's mercies towards them, was called a 'sacrifice of confession,' Lev. vii. 12, (זֶבַח תְּרוּרָה), which phrase is here used in this text, and translated, 'sacrifice of

thanksgiving,' or sacrifice of praise. The signification of the Hebrew word is the rather to be observed, because it doth excellently set out the nature of 'thanksgiving,' or 'praise,' as it hath reference to God, which is, to confess and acknowledge God to be what he is, to do what he doth, and to give what he giveth.<sup>1</sup> To offer a sacrifice at such a confession, or thanksgiving, added much to the solemnity thereof, and made it more honourable in itself, and more acceptable to God, which, that we may somewhat the more distinctly discern, let us take a brief view of the several sacrifices which were appointed by the law to be offered.

Sect. III. *Of the several sacrifices of the Law.*

A sacrifice (as the word is usually taken in the Law) was 'a pious rite whereby something was offered to God.' I term it a rite, because it was one of those external ceremonies which God ordained to be used in his church till the fulness of time should come. I add this attribute, 'pious,' unto it, to shew that it was an action of piety, a part of divine worship. In every sacrifice something, either with or without life, was brought, and by the priest, in the name of him that brought it, offered to the Lord. Herein lieth a main difference betwixt this and other rites, and in special betwixt a sacrifice and a sacrament. The essential action of a sacrament is a receiving from God: of a sacrifice, an offering to God. They which entered into the ark, and abode therein, they which passed through the Red Sea, and they which were under the cloud, (all which were sacramental rites, answerable to our sacrament of baptism, 1 Pet. iii. 21; 1 Cor. x. 2.) received thereby preservation, protection, and direction from the Lord. So they which were circumcised received the seal of remission of sins. They which celebrated the passover received the seal of deliverance from bondage. They also which ate manna, and drank the water that flowed out of the rock, (which answered to the sacrament of the Lord's supper,) 1 Cor. x. 3, 4, apparently received both spiritual and temporal blessings from the Lord. But in all manner of sacrifices something was brought and offered to the Lord, as will more evidently appear

<sup>1</sup> Debet id, quod illustrandæ alterius rei gratia assumitur, ipsum esse clarius eo quod illuminat.—*Quintil.*, lib. viii. cap. 3

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Guide to go to God' on the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, sec. 239.

by a particular enumeration of the several sacrifices, which may thus be distinguished :

Two ends there were of sacrifices—

One, to pacify the wrath of God provoked against man for his sin. On which ground David giveth this advice to Saul, 'If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him smell an offering.' 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

Another, to gratify God for some favour received. Thus Asa and his people, 2 Chron. xv. 11, having gotten victory over the Ethiopians, that came against him with an army of ten hundred thousand, offered of the spoil to the Lord.

According to these ends sacrifices were,

1. Expiatory, for expiation of sin.
2. Gratulatory, for testification of thanks.

Expiatory sacrifices were express types of the sacrifice of Christ, by which only sin could be taken away. Under this head are comprised, whole burnt-offerings for atonement, Lev. xvi. 6, &c. ; several sorts of sacrifices for the sins of several persons, Lev. iv. 3, &c., as of priests, whole assemblies, princes and private persons ; and all kinds of sacrifices for cleansing such as were legally unclean, Lev. xiv. 4, &c., xv. 14, &c., as lepers, those that had running issues, or had touched a dead corpse, or any unclean thing, with the like.

Gratulatory sacrifices were visible representations of that praise, Heb. xiii. 15, obedience, Rom. xii. 1, and benevolence, Phil. iv. 18, Heb. xiii. 16, which all God's people are bound unto. Of these there were two sorts—

1. Such things as had life, and were slain.
2. Such as had no life, and were offered to God.

Many peace-offerings, free-offerings, vow-offerings, and firstlings of living creatures, were slain for gratulatory sacrifices ; and that to shew, that even in gratulation expiation must be made, and that by the blood and sacrifice of Christ all things are made acceptable to God. The word, therefore, that importeth slaying is attributed to gratulatory sacrifices, Lev. xxii. 21, (זבחי) Heb. xiii. 15, (*dosia*.)

Their meat-offerings, Lev. ii. 1, &c., and drink-offerings, Exod. xxix. 40, many free-offerings and vow-offerings, first-fruits, tithes, and such like, were of things without life. These are usually expressed by a word that properly signifieth a gift, Lev. ii. 1,

(זבחה) Heb. v. 1, (*ōzōza*.) which we translate offering, because in way of gratitude they were given to the Lord, and offered up to him.

Gratulatory offerings were ordinary, or extraordinary.

Ordinary, were those which were constantly offered every morning and evening, Exod. xxix. 40, &c., and at other times in their seasons were brought, as first-fruits, tithes, &c.

Extraordinary, were such as for removing some great and imminent judgment, 2 Sam. xxiv. 25, or conferring some special blessing, were brought and offered unto the Lord, 2 Chron. xv. 11.

1. The offering up of these extraordinary sacrifices set out a most solemn and extraordinary manner of praising God. And this is the substance of that which the prophet here intendeth under this phrase, 'I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.' For they offered to God, not in regard of any need that God had, but as giving thanks for what he gave, and as sanctifying the creature.<sup>1</sup>

Of an extraordinary manner of praising God for extraordinary favours, sufficient hath been before delivered, sec. 3.

2. The testifying of his gratitude by an outward warrantable rite, was before expressed, ver. 13, sec. 86.

3. The kind of sacrifice whereby the prophet would testify his thanksgiving, was a duty of piety, an especial part of God's worship, prescribed by God, and of force in those days ; from which particular we may safely infer this general—

I. True gratitude to God is to be testified by performing due worship to him.

4. This rite being such an one as in and by it that which God by his law required was given to him, it giveth instance that—

II. What is warrantable must in gratitude be given to God.

Sec. 121. *Of testifying gratitude by piety.*

I. *True gratitude to God is to be testified by performing due worship to him.* As this is implied under offering of sacrifices, (whereby the Jews were wont

<sup>1</sup> Offerimus Deo non quasi indigentes, sed gratias agentes donationi ejus, et sanctificantes creaturam.—*Tren. advers. Her.*, lib. iv. cap. 34.

to testify their gratefulness when they had more than ordinary occasion to do so,) so is it in other places more plainly and expressly set down; as where the psalmist saith, 'I will come unto thine house in the multitude of thy mercies, and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple,' Ps. v. 7; 'I will sing praise unto thee: I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness,' Ps. cxxxviii. 1, 2. As he promiseth for himself, so he stirreth up others after the same manner to testify their gratitude, saying, 'Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: worship the Lord,' Ps. xxix. 2; xcv. 2, 6; xevi. 8, 9. Where Jacob, in his vow of thanksgiving, useth this phrase, 'This stone shall be God's house,' Gen. xxviii. 22, what else doth he mean, but that that place should be consecrated to duties of piety for worshipping God? Thus Abraham's servant, in testimony of his thankfulness to God for the good success which he gave him, 'worshipped the Lord,' Gen. xxiv. 26; so did the Israelites after Moses had brought them news of their deliverance from Egypt, Exod. iv. 31; xii. 27. So Joshua, Josh. v. 14; Gideon, Judges vii. 15; Jehoshaphat with his people, 2 Chron. xx. 18; Hezekiah with his also, chap. xxxix. 29; and many others. Yea, the celestial spirits do use in praising God to worship him, Rev. iv. 10; v. 14; vii. 11; xi. 16; xix. 4.

1. A main end of praising is to glorify God; for, saith the Lord himself, 'Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me,' Ps. l. 23. But there is nothing wherein and whereby we may more glorify God than by worshipping him. Witness the practice, not only of them who on earth are instructed by the Spirit of illumination in the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God, but also of them in heaven, who are made perfect in all knowledge and understanding thereof.

2. Works of piety, wherein the worship of God consisteth, are the works wherein God most delighteth, and which he best accepteth. The spouse, therefore, of the Lord, that the King might greatly delight in her, hath this advice given to her, 'Worship thou him,' Ps. xlv. 11.

3. By works of piety all other actions of rejoicing are seasonal and sanctified. This moved the pious Jews to begin their weighty affairs with sacrifices,

<sup>1</sup> *Locus dignus qui consecratur precibus fundendis Deo.—Trem. et Jom. in Scholias.*

which were then, as we have heard, principal parts of piety and of divine worship, and therewith to end the same, compare 1 Sam. x. 8 with 1 Chron. xvi. 1.

4. By giving thanks in and by such duties as are prescribed for God's worship, we shew that our hearts are set on God, and prepared to do service to him who hath done kindness to us.<sup>1</sup> Yea, the duties wherein service is done to God will raise our minds unto God, and fix them the more steadfastly on him. So as this kind of sacrifice is unquestionless the best and greatest that we can offer up, a perfect oblation in the kind of it. And this will prove an occasion of much confidence to us.

As occasions of thankfulness are offered unto us, and as by God's Spirit we are moved to take those occasions for giving thanks, let us here learn how to order, how to sanctify, how to make the same acceptable to God. Though the particular ceremony of worshipping God by sacrifices be now abrogated, yet the general equity of performing due worship to God doth still and ever shall remain in force. Take notice, therefore, of that manner of worshipping God which now under the gospel is warrantable. The parts of divine worship are prayer, singing of psalms, reading, preaching, hearing the word, and celebrating the sacraments. These are as sacrifices of bullocks and calves, goats and kids, sheep and lambs, turtles, pigeons, sparrows; and all manner of meat and drink-offerings.<sup>2</sup> By a pious, devout, reverent, and upright manner of performing these, thou testifiest and sanctifiest thy thanksgiving to God. When these holy duties of piety are performed for gratitude's sake, when in, with, and by them thanks is given to God, then are they, for substance, in a spiritual respect, sacrifices of thanksgiving, and the Lord will accept them as sacrifices of thanksgiving.

#### Sec. 113. *Of giving to God.*

II. *What is warrantable must be given to God.* The sacrifices, whereof mention is here made, were by

<sup>1</sup> *Continuum gratiarum actionem Domino exhibete. Hoc maximum est sacrificium, hæc oblatio perfecta. Hoc fiducia nobis fiet occasio.—Chrys. ad Pop., hom. 72.*

<sup>2</sup> *Hoc est sacrificium acceptabile; hoc est holocaustum pingue, ut lauletur Deus, &c.—Jerome, Comment. in Ps. xlix.*



the law prescribed; and in all manner of sacrifices by the law prescribed something was given to God. They, therefore, that appeared before the Lord without a sacrifice are said to appear 'empty.' Dent. xvi. 16. (רֵיקָם); which was expressly forbidden. The many precepts, Dent. xii. 11; Exod. xxii. 29; Neh. x. 32, &c., of bringing oblations, vow-offerings, freewill-offerings, first-fruits, tithes, and other gifts unto the Lord, and God's gracious acceptance thereof, 2 Chron. xxxi. 5, 10; yea, and the many threatenings, Mal. iii. 8, 9, against those who brought not those gifts unto the Lord, and judgments executed upon them, give sufficient proof to the fore-mentioned *must*. 'What is warrantable must be given to God.' The pious Jews manifested herein much zeal to the Lord. When the tabernacle was first to be made, the people were so free-hearted and bountiful in bringing rams' skins, badgers' skins, shittim wood, oil, spices, sweet incense, fine linen, blue, purple, and scarlet, brass, silver, gold, and all manner of precious stones, as they brought more than enough, Exod. xxxvi. 5, 6; a proclamation was made to restrain them. Wonderful, great, and precious were the treasures which 'David and his princes prepared for the Lord towards the building of his house,' 1 Chron. xxix. 1, &c. At that time they offered burnt-offerings to the Lord, a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand sheep, with their drink-offerings, and sacrifices in abundance, ver. 21; 'Asa and his people offered seven hundred oxen, and seven thousand sheep,' 2 Chron. xv. 11; 'Hezekiah and his people, two thousand bullocks, and seventeen thousand sheep,' chap. xxx. 34; 'Josiah and his people, three thousand and eight hundred bullocks, and thirty-seven thousand six hundred small cattle,' chap. xxxv. 7, &c.; Solomon went beyond all these, and offered a sacrifice of 'two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep,' chap. xxxvii. 5. Behold here what testimonies of gratitude were given to the Lord.

*Obj.* To what end were such oblations, whenas God required them not, nor cared for them? Ps. xl. 6.

*Ans.* 1. Singly and simply in themselves, as external and earthly things, God took no delight in them, Ps. l. 8.

2. As mere ceremonies, separated from the sub-

stance and truth which they typified, God neither enjoined nor required them, Ps. xl. 6.

3. As cloaks for hypocrites, to cover and colour their impieties and iniquities, God detested them, Isa. i. 10, &c., and lxvi. 3.

But as external evidences of true piety, as types of heavenly truths, as parts of that outward worship and service which God prescribed, as visible demonstrations of gratitude, he was well pleased with these sacrifices; they caused a sweet savour to enter into his nostrils, Gen. viii. 21; Exod. xxix. 18; Lev. i. 9.

Though God, the Creator of all things, stand in need of nothing that the creature hath, or can offer to him,<sup>1</sup> yet by giving to him the things which in his word we find to be acceptable to him, we manifest a willing and ready mind to do what lieth in our power; and give evidence that if anything which we had could stand the Lord in any stead, or do him any good, we would with all our hearts gratify him therewith, which mind God doth as kindly and graciously accept, as if indeed he were profited by that which we offer unto him.

Be liberal and bountiful to the Lord, whosoever ye be that have anything to give to the Lord.<sup>2</sup> And who is it that hath not something, yea, that hath not much to give, if he be no niggard of what he hath? The poorest that be have as many calves as Solomon had to offer to the Lord, 'calves of their lips,' Hosea xiv. 2. These are sacrifices which may be offered up to God, Heb. xiii. 15. The poorest that be have a body, which they may present as 'a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,' Rom. xii. 1. The poorest that be may every day, morning and evening, and at other times also, 'direct their prayer to God as incense,' Ps. cxli. 2. Yea, they may mix therewith the sweetest incense of the intercession of Christ, and offer all up 'upon the golden altar which is before the throne,' Rev. viii. 3. The poorest that be may bring to God 'a broken heart and a contrite spirit,' which is 'a sacrifice that

<sup>1</sup> Dedit populo præceptum faciendarum oblationum, quamvis non indigeret eis, ut disceret Deo servire.—*Iren. advers. Hær.*, lib. iv. cap. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Quisquis bene cogitat quid vocet Domino, que vota reddat, seipsum vocat, seipsum reddit: hoc exigitur, hoc debetur.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. cxv.*

God will not despise,' Ps. li. 17. The poorest that he may 'do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God,' which the Lord preferreth before 'burnt-offerings, and calves of a year old;' yea, before 'thousands of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil,' Micah vi. 8. These and other like offerings have all of all sorts (not the poorest excepted) now under the gospel to bring and give unto the Lord. These sacrifices saints offer to God.<sup>1</sup> These sacrifices they solemnise without intermission day and night, especially that of giving themselves to God. All good works are sacrifices fit for God and acceptable to him. There are also several talents given to several persons, though not to all alike, (for to one are given five, to another two, to another but one,) yet to him that hath the least so much is given, as by a good improvement thereof he may bring some increase and advantage to the Lord,<sup>2</sup> and that so acceptably as the Lord thereby will be moved to say, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things,' &c., Mat. xxv. 21. As for rich men, they may yet further 'honour God with their substance,' Prov. iii. 9; they may 'do good and distribute, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased,' Heb. xiii. 16. They may so 'communicate to the necessities,' not only of the poorest saints, but also of the ministers of God's word, as what they do in this kind may be 'an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God,' Phil. iv. 18. Thus, as there were sacrifices of old, there are sacrifices still; as oblations of old, so oblations still. Only the kind of them is altered.<sup>3</sup>

These sacrifices allowed, approved, accepted, under the gospel, 'please the Lord much better than oxen and bullocks that have horns and hoofs,' Ps. lxi. 31, yet to us they are nothing so chargeable, as the oblations and sacrifices were to the Jews. Why then do we return so little to the Lord? are his mercies fewer in number or less in worth to us under

the gospel, than they were to his people under the law? If the difference betwixt the old and new covenant, betwixt God's dealing with his church before and since Christ was exhibited, were thoroughly discerned, we should find just cause to say, 'He hath not dealt so with the Jews as he hath dealt with Christians.' We want those zealous affections which the pious Jews had. Were our inward disposition answerable to theirs, we would not, we could not come so short as we do of outward expressions of gratefulness. Let us by due meditation of God's surpassing kindness to us, be stirred up willingly and cheerfully to give what we shall understand to be acceptable to him. God gives all: to God again let all be returned.<sup>1</sup>

#### Sec. 114. Of vowing praise to God.

Ver. 18. *I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.*

The immediate inference of this verse upon the former, sheweth the principal matter of the prophet's vow, for he maketh mention of his vow as of a motive, the more to provoke him to offer up a sacrifice of thanksgiving.<sup>2</sup> But if he had not vowed such a sacrifice, what motive could his vow have been thereto? This approved pattern of the prophet giveth evidence that—

Praise to God is a meet matter to be vowed.

Where mention is made of performing vows, express mention useth there to be of this very matter, and that where directions are given for vows, thus, 'Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows,' Ps. l. 14; and where performance is promised, thus, 'My praise shall be of thee, I will pay my vows,' Ps. xxii. 25; 'Thy vows are upon me, O God; I will render praises unto thee,' Ps. lvi. 12; 'I will sing praise to thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows,' Ps. lxi. 8.<sup>3</sup> The praises which he sang to the Lord tending to this end, 'that he might perform his vow,' evidently proved that he had vowed so to do. Where Jacob vowed that the stone which he set for a pillar should be 'God's house,' Gen. xxviii. 22, what intended he thereby

<sup>1</sup> Hoc vos sacrificium Deo offertis; hoc sacrificium sine intermissione die ac nocte celebratis; hostie facti, &c.—*Cypri. Epist.*, lib. iii. ep. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Apud Deo sacrificia sunt opera virtutis.—*Amb. de Cain et Abel*, cap. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Oblationes et illic, oblationes et hic. Sacrificia in populo, sacrificia et in ecclesia, sed est species immutata tantum.—*Iren. advers. Hæc*, lib. iv. cap. 34.

<sup>1</sup> Deo datori omnia tribuenda.—*Chrys.*, hom. 10. in 1 Cor. iii.

<sup>2</sup> See ver. 14, sec. 89.

<sup>3</sup> Hæc sunt vota prophetæ, ut laudem dominicam celebret.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. Iv.*

but that public and solemn praise should be given to God? This was the main substance of Jephthah's vow, Judges xi. 31, that in way of thanks he would give something to the Lord. If his vow had not too far extended itself even to such things as might be offered to the Lord, it had been a warrantable and commendable vow.

1. A vow rightly made is of something to be done for the Lord's sake, and to testify our respect to him. If a vow be made against any sin, or against temptations or occasions that lead thereto, it is because by sin God is offended and dishonoured. Now to vow against that whereby God is offended and dishonoured, is implicitly to please and to honour God. If a vow be made for performing any duty, that is made somewhat the more directly to the honour and praise of God, for all good duties tend therunto. Now, because there is nothing wherein and whereby we can more honour God, or better testify our respect to God than by giving praise to him, to praise God must needs be a very fit subject for a vow; yea, the best that can be.

2. In making a vow something is aimed at, either as received or as expected from the Lord, which occasioneth the making thereof. When in distress a vow is made, it is in expectation of deliverance from that distress. When to avoid sin a vow is made, it is to gain assurance of pardon for that sin before committed, and assistance against it for the time to come. Though in these and other like cases a vow be made before the kindness for which it is made be received, yet it is to bind us unto gratitude for the kindness which we desire and expect. If after a kindness conferred a vow be made, then it is an apparent testimony of gratefulness. But what duty more proper to gratitude than praise of God? wherefore, to praise God is a matter most meet to be vowed.

3. Those duties whereunto we are most bound, from performance whereof no superior power on earth may hinder us, which by the gift of grace that God useth to give to his children we are able to do, we ought especially to vow. But in the uppermost rank of all such duties, praising of God is most justly to be placed. So as, if any be meet to be vowed, this is of all most meet.

4. A vow must always be joined with prayer.

Commonly when men earnestly desire the removal of some evil, or the obtaining of some good thing, in opening their desire to God, they will vow something to him. At least, when a vow is made, prayer must then be made for grace to keep it. Now, when in making any petition to God, the mind is fixed on rendering something to God, and is thereby brought to vow praise unto him, this vowing of praise will much enlarge the desire of a man's heart, and settle his soul in assurance of obtaining what he desireth.

A vow of praising God in craving any blessing from God is like to this protestation, 'As we forgive them that trespass against us,' annexed to the fifth petition, whereby we are stirred up more earnestly to crave, and more steadfastly to believe, pardon of our sins. The thought of praising God, especially when it is ratified by a vow, works much confidence in God's favour towards him that is in truth resolved to perform that vow. Is not this, then, a very meet matter to be vowed?

Do ye now inquire what ye may vow, what ye may render? Whether such creatures as were sometimes offered on altars? Thou needest offer no such thing. There is in thee what thou mayest vow and render. From the ark of thy heart bring forth the incense of praise! Now, therefore, ye who are well informed in the lawfulness, meetness, excellency, and utility of this duty of making vows to God, (whereof before,) and are thereupon moved to put the duty in practice, here take notice of this main matter of a vow, and be forward in vowing praise to God. When for themselves men crave in sickness, recovery of health; in penury, supply of their necessities; in restraint, liberty; in sterility, children; in oppression, protection; in their labours, success; in any danger, safety; or in any other case, any needful blessing; yea, when they pray in the behalf of others, whether for the church in general or such parts thereof as are in distress, or for their own nation, city, town, parish, family, children, or any others; when they pray for any more than ordinary blessing and favour from the Lord, let

*Quid voveatis, quid reddatis? An fere animalia illa que offeruntur apud aras aliquando? Nulli tale offeras. In te est quod voveas et reddas. De cordis arca profer laudis incensam.—Aug. Enar. in Psal. lv.*

them in making that prayer vow to render praise unto the Lord, that when the Lord giveth any evidence of hearing their prayer they may say, 'I will praise thee, O Lord, that I may perform my vow.'

See more of this verse before on ver. 14.

Sec. 115. *Of the meaning and method of the last verse.*

Ver. 19. *In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.*

In these words<sup>1</sup> the prophet determinately and expressly setteth down the place where he vowed to praise the Lord. In the former verse, and before that in the 14th verse, he generally professed to do it 'in the presence of all God's people.' Here he describeth the place of the presence of God's people, where they assembled together, and that—

1. By the relation thereof to God.
2. By the situation of it.

The place in relation to God is styled the Lord's house. This title is in Scripture used to express a select place, or an elect people.

As it hath reference to a place, it is taken indefinitely or determinately.

1. In an indefinite acception, any place where God is pleased to afford an especial representation of his presence may be named God's house. Thus that place where Jacob in his journey lay and slept is called 'the house of God,' Gen. xxviii. 17, because of that divine vision wherein the Lord there appeared to him. The reason of this name given to that place is expressly rendered in these words, 'Surely the Lord is in this place,' ver. 26. On a like ground the places where the Lord appeared to Moses, Exod. iii. 5, and to Joshua, are called holy ground, Josh. v. 15.

Determinately, this title, God's house, is attributed to places on earth or in heaven.

On earth it was given to two places, the tabernacle and the temple, Judges xviii. 31, and xx. 26; 1 Sam. i. 24, and iii. 15; both that which was built in Solomon's time, 1 Kings vi. 37, 38, and that also which was built after the captivity, Ezra vi. 7; Hag. i. 11. These in their several times were places where were especial representations of God's presence, and whither God's people by his appoint-

ment assembled to worship him, and in those respects were called God's house.

2. The tabernacle continued to be God's house for the space of four hundred and eighty-seven years, from the first making of it in Moses' time till the temple which Solomon built was finished. Then was the tabernacle carried into the temple, and after that remained no more to be of use for a house of God, 1 Kings viii. 4.

3. The temple which Solomon built continued to be God's house for the space of four hundred years, from the time when it was first built till the burning of it down in Zedekiah's time, 2 Kings xxv. 9.

4. The temple built after the captivity continued for the space almost of five hundred years, from the time of Zerubbabel, Ezra iii. 8, till it was utterly ruined by the Romans, Mat. xxiv. 2.

5. The highest heaven, John xiv. 2, is called God's house most properly, because the most perspicuous manifestation of God's presence that can be given is there given.

6. The elect people, who are styled the house of God, are those that are comprised under this title, church, which is the communion of saints. In this communion, all that profess the true Christian religion, and subject themselves to the ordinances thereof, 1 Cor. i. 2; 1 Pet. i. 2, are, in the judgment of charity, reputed. To these St Paul, having given this title, 'house of God,' to shew whom he meant thereby he addeth, 'which is the church of the living God,' 1 Tim. iii. 15. These St Peter meaneth where he saith, 'Judgment must begin at the house of God,' 1 Pet. iv. 17. For as the whole church jointly considered in itself, so also every particular member, is counted and called God's house. Thus is this phrase taken where the apostle, in relation to the Lord, saith, 'Whose house we are,' Heb. iii. 6; and again, 'Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them,' 2 Cor. vi. 16. So as every one may account himself to be a spiritual house of God, so he walk not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the particular house of God which is here in this psalm mentioned, it can hardly be de-

<sup>1</sup> Domum Dei spiritualem seipsum quisque agnoscat, qui tamen non in carne ambulat, sed in spiritu.—*Bern. super. Cant.*, serm. 46.

<sup>1</sup> See sec. 107.

terminated for certain which it should be, because the author and time of penning this psalm are not expressed. If the psalm were penned by any prophet after David's time, then questionless he meant the temple. If David, as it is most probable, were the penman of it, then can it not be meant of the temple, which was not then built, but rather of the tabernacle.

But hence ariseth another doubt. In David's time there were two sacred tabernacles. One made by Moses, called the tabernacle of the Lord, which was in the high place at Gibeon, 1 Chron. xxi. 29; 2 Chron. i. 3. The other made by David for the ark of God, 1 Chron. xv. 1, and xvi. 1; 2 Sam. vi. 17. In both these tabernacles there were ministers appointed to perform daily services to the Lord, 1 Chron. xvi. 37-39, &c. Which, then, of these tabernacles is here meant?

They were in several places. Gibeon was one of the cities of Benjamin allotted to the priests, Josh. xviii. 25, and xxi. 17. There was the tabernacle; but the ark was in the city of David, which was Zion, in Jerusalem, 2 Sam. v. 6, 7, 9.

The title, 'house of God,' and the courts applied to that house, give some evidence that he meant the tabernacle made by Moses. For that is usually styled the 'house of God,' Judges xix. 18; 2 Sam. xii. 20; the 'tabernacle of the Lord,' Num. xvii. 13, and xix. 13; Josh. xxii. 19; 1 Kings ii. 28, 29; 1 Chron. xvi. 39. But the tabernacle that David made is never so called. Besides, we read of a spacious court appertaining to the tabernacle made by Moses, Exod. xxvii. 9, &c.; Lev. vi. 26. For that tabernacle, as afterwards the temple after the pattern thereof, was divided into three parts.

1. The innermost, called the *sanctum sanctorum*, Exod. xxvi. 33, the most holy place, wherinto the high priest only was to enter, and that but once a year, Lev. xvi. 2.

2. The middlemost, called the 'holy place,' Exod. xxxix. 1, wherein the priests performed their daily services, in which respect it was called the 'court of priests,' 2 Chron. iv. 9.

3. The outermost, called the 'court of the tabernacle,' Exod. xxvii. 9. Into this came all the people, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 5, in which respect it was called 'the great court,' chap. iv. 9. Hither they

brought their sacrifices; here they stood and beheld the priests offering them: for the great altar whereon the ordinary sacrifices were offered stood at the partition betwixt this court and the 'holy place,' Exod. xl. 6. Hence was it that the people are said to 'compass the altar,' Ps. xxvi. 6, and to 'lay hold on the horns of the altar,' 1 Kings i. 50, and ii. 28. But we read not of any such courts appertaining to the tabernacle which David made. Yea, after David had made a tabernacle for the ark, 1 Chron. xvi. 40; 2 Chron. i. 3, the most solemn assemblies were notwithstanding at the other tabernacle. It is therefore most probable that by 'the courts of the Lord's house' he here meaneth that public and solemn place of assembling at the 'tabernacle of the Lord.'

*Object.* That tabernacle was in David's time at Gibeon, 1 Chron. xvi. 39; 2 Chron. i. 3; how can that stand with the situation of the place here mentioned, 'In the midst of Jerusalem'?

*Ans.* It is not necessary that both those clauses be applied to one and the same place. But as he mentioneth two duties, so he noteth two places, fit for each duty. The first duty is to 'offer sacrifice of thanksgiving.' This was most fit to be done in the tabernacle at Gibeon, which was 'the court of the Lord's house.' The other was to 'call upon the name of the Lord.' This was most fit to be done before the ark, which was in the tabernacle that David had made for it in his own city, even 'in the midst of Jerusalem,' 1 Chron. xv. 29.

Jerusalem was the most famous city that ever appertained to the Jews. It was the place where Melchizedek, the first, most ancient, and best king that we read of after the flood, even that king who by reason of his integrity was called 'a king of righteousness,' Heb. vii. 2, and by reason of the peace which he preserved, the place where he reigned was called Salem, Gen. xiv. 18. That Jerusalem was this Salem, both the notation thereof, and also the title Salem, Ps. lxxxvi. 2, (after it was called Jerusalem,) given to it, do give sufficient proof. The Hebrews,<sup>1</sup> Gen. xiv. 18, do use the name Jerusalem where this Salem is mentioned. This title Jerusalem is compounded of two words. One is taken from that proverbial name which Abraham gave to the place where he was about to

<sup>1</sup> שלם, Targum, ירושלם, Item Ps lxxxvi. 2.

sacrifice his son, 'Jehovah-jireh,'<sup>1</sup> the Lord will provide,' Gen. xxii. 14. The other is taken from the name of the place where Melchizedek was king, which was Salem, peace. So as the meaning of the name of Jerusalem is, 'He will provide peace,' or 'the vision of peace.' The Hebrew word is oft set down in the dual number, a number that signifieth two, because of the two places whereon it was built, which were Salem, before mentioned, and Moriah, the place whither God sent Abraham to sacrifice his son. This place being the chiefest of all the cities that were among the Jews, the only people of God under the law, wherein the ark then was, wherein the temple was to be built, was an especial type of the church of God; and as in the Old Testament the militant church is oft set out by that name, Ps. li. 18, and cxxviii. 5; Isa. xxiv. 23, xl. 9, and lxii. 1, 7; Jer. iii. 17; so in the New the triumphant church, Rev. iii. 12, and xxi. 2, 10. Though therefore I cannot but think that the prophet here meaneth literally the city which was called Jerusalem, yet I doubt not but that under this title may also typically be meant the 'church of God.'<sup>2</sup>

The substance of that which he intendeth by this description of the place is to shew that he would perform the forenamed duties in public and populous places. Such were the 'courts of the Lord's house,' where all the people of the Lord met together; such also was Jerusalem, the metropolis and chief city of the kingdom, where the king's court was, and whither all of all sorts resorted. And that he might not be thought to intend to do it in a private corner of the city, closely and secretly, he addeth, 'in the midst,' in the most open and populous part of that ample and populous place—which implieth a holy boldness; he would not be ashamed to bind himself publicly to perform such bounden, public duties. Yea, further to shew how his heart was set on that place where 'the ark of the Lord' was, by a most elegant and familiar kind of turning his speech to that place, (*אֶת־מַסְגְּרָךְ*), as speaking to a most familiar friend in whom he delighted, he saith, 'Thee, O Jerusalem. In the midst of thee.'

<sup>1</sup> ירהוה, יראה יהוה, Jehovah providebit. Jerusalem est visio pacis.—*Ber. in Dedic. Eccles.*, ser. 5. ררושלים.

<sup>2</sup> In atris, &c., id est, in ecclesia.—*Trem. et Jun.*, in Annot. in hunc loc.

In this pattern of the prophet is declared—  
A fit place for solemn and public duties.

Of this description both the matter and the manner are distinctly expressed.

The matter pointeth at two places :—

1. That which was consecrated to sacred duties;
2. That where the most glorious representation of God's presence was set.

The former is set out—

1. Generally, by the use of it: 'In the courts.' Courts are places for assemblies.

2. Particularly, by the quality of it: 'House of God.' God's house is a sacred house, where sacred duties of piety are performed to him.

The latter is expressed by the name of it, 'Jerusalem;' and amplified by that part thereof where he would perform the forementioned duty, 'the midst.'

The manner of setting out this latter is by an apostrophe, turning his speech to the place itself, and speaking to it as to an intelligible<sup>1</sup> creature, 'Thee, O Jerusalem.'

The first branch, 'In the courts,' sheweth that—

I. Public duties must be performed in public places. The 'sacrifice of thanksgiving' which he professeth to offer was a public duty. The 'courts' which here he meaneth, in which he would offer that sacrifice, was a public place.

This style, 'of the house of God,' (which was given by reason of the divine service that was there performed to God,) giveth evidence that—

II. Places set apart for God's worship are God's houses.

'The midst' of that populous city, Jerusalem, being here so expressly mentioned, implieth that—

III. God's praises must be boldly set forth.

The manner of directing his speech to Jerusalem, which was a type of the church of Christ, as to one in whom he much delighted, intimateth that—

IV. Our delight must be in God's church.

Sec. 118. *Of performing public duties in public places.*

I. *Public duties must be performed in public places.*<sup>2</sup> I say public duties, both because such a one was the sacrifice of thanksgiving which is here intended, and

<sup>1</sup> That is, 'intelligent.'—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 115. See 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part ii. sec. 82, &c.]

also because of private duties Christ saith, 'Enter into thy closet, shut thy door,' Mat. vi. 6; 'appear not unto men' to do this or that, ver. 18. But for public duties, as here the prophet protesteth to do them in 'the courts of God's house,' so elsewhere the Holy Ghost commandeth so to do: 'Bring an offering, and come into his courts,' Ps. xvi. 8; 'Enter into his courts with praise,' Ps. c. 4. That charge which under the law was given for bringing sacrifices to 'the door of the tabernacle,' Lev. xvii. 4, concludeth the equity of this duty. So doth the frequent mention of 'praising,' Ps. xxii. 22; 'blessing,' Ps. xxvi. 12; giving 'thanks to God,' Ps. xxxv. 18; and 'not concealing God's kindness from the congregation,' Ps. xl. 10. 'The coming together in the church,' and 'into one place,' 1 Cor. xi. 20, whereof the apostle maketh mention, was a public assembly.

1. Public places have a promise of God's special presence in them, 1 Kings ix. 3; Mat. xviii. 20. As a visible evidence hereof in the tabernacle, Exod. xl. 20, and temple there was the ark and mercy-seat, 1 Kings viii. 6. Now where can we with better confidence expect to have duties of piety accepted than in those places where God after a special manner is present, expecting such duties to be performed to him, and accepting them when they are in a right manner performed? In confidence hereof the devout Jews did not only frequent, Ps. cxxii. 4, those public places when they had liberty to go to them; but also when they were in other lands, so as they could not personally come to them, they would pray towards them, Dan. vi. 10.

2. Public places use to have many people assembled together in them. Where many are assembled there are many eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of the things that are there done. Where many such witnesses are, many spirits will be stirred up to glorify God for that which they see done by others. They who are moved to glorify God for that which they approve in others, will be moved to do the like themselves, that others may likewise glorify God for that which they do. They which discern such a blessed fruit to sprout from the public services which they perform in public places cannot but be much cheered in their souls, and also encouraged to take all occasions of doing the like again and again.

*Object.* Christ and his apostles performed public duties in private places.

*Ans.* Difference must be put betwixt duties, persons, times, and places.

1. There are some duties which may and must be performed both publicly and privately, as prayer, reading the word, catechising, &c. The manner of performing these make them to be accounted public or private.

2. There are persons ordinarily and extraordinarily called. They who are extraordinarily called may have such a special instinct and peculiar warrant as can be no pattern for ordinary persons.

3. There are times of founding new churches and edifying settled churches. Planters and founders may have more liberty than such as find churches planted and settled in good order.

4. There are places of persecution, where no liberty is granted for public assemblies; and places of peace, where churches have much rest and great liberty. In places of persecution bounden duties must rather be performed in private than omitted; for matter of circumstance must give place to matters of substance, matters of convenience to matters of necessity.

Wherefore, to leave extraordinary persons to their extraordinary warrant, we that live in well-settled churches, where through the divine providence we have public places for divine services set apart, whereunto we have much liberty on all occasions to resort, ought to be of his mind who 'was glad when they said, Let us go into the house of the Lord,' Ps. cxxii. 1, and was exceedingly perplexed when by force he was kept from thence, Ps. lxxxiv. 1, &c. It was of old foretold that this should be the disposition of saints under the gospel in the kingdom of Christ, to say, 'Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,' &c., Isa. ii. 13. Christ and his apostles, though they had just cause and good warrant to perform many public duties in private places, yet did they much frequent those public places where public duties were in their time performed. Of Christ it is expressly recorded, that, 'as his custom was,' Luke iv. 16, 'he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day.' Of the apostles also, and of them that continued in their doctrine and fellowship, it is said, 'They continued daily with one accord in the temple, praising God,' Acts ii. 46. Herein lieth a main dif-

ference betwixt such as, like Christ, do all to edifying, ('He ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort,' John xviii. 20.) and such as do all for their own ends, seeking to beguile others, ('They creep into houses, and lead captive silly women,' 2 Tim. iii. 6.) Wherefore to manifest a mind that aimeth at God's glory, the edification of the church, the quickening of our own spirits, let us take the occasions that are offered to go into the courts of the Lord's house, and perform duties of piety according to their kind—public duties publicly, solemn duties solemnly. This is a good Christian decorum, agreeable to that apostolical rule, 'Let all things be done decently and in order,' 1 Cor. xiv. 40. Let us, therefore, be every one of his mind who said, 'In the midst of the faithful people I will praise thee, I will publish thee, O Lord.'<sup>1</sup>

Sec. 117. *Of God's houses.*

II. *Places set apart for God's worship are God's houses.*<sup>2</sup> More than five hundred times is this title, 'house of God,' or 'house of the Lord,' in holy Scripture attributed to places deputed unto divine service; and because worship is done to God, not only in material temples, but also in the communion of saints, yea, and in the bodies and souls of particular Christians, they are also called 'God's houses,' Heb. x. 21, and iii. 6.

1. Though the Lord in his infinite essence be everywhere present, 'filling heaven and earth,' Jer. xxiii. 23, 24, and have 'the eyes' of his providence 'in every place, beholding the evil and the good,' Prov. xv. 3, yet the special presence of his grace and favour abideth in the places where he is truly and duly worshipped, 1 Kings ix. 3; Mat. xviii. 20. These places, therefore, are to him as kings' palaces and houses, which most properly they account their own.

2. God's greatest care is over these places. He bringeth light into them by his word; he beautifieth them by his ordinances; he continually repaireth them, and keepeth them from ruin by holy discipline. In them are the treasures of his graces. Orders, offices, all needful provision, the bread of life, the wine of spiritual consolation, and other like

blessings of a house are there. There God dines and sups with his people. All things fit for a house are there, which, whosoever observeth, cannot but say of such a place, It is 'the house of God.'

3. God is very jealous over such places. He cannot endure to have them defiled, profaned. It was one cause of the Jews' captivity, that 'they polluted the house of the Lord,' 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14.

Oh how enamoured should we be with such places! If we be where we cannot come to them, nor join with God's saints in worshipping the Lord, how should it grieve us! Ps. lxxxvi. 1, &c. No place in the world, were it every way as fair, as fertile, as pleasant, as profitable in all earthly commodities as Eden or Paradise was, should give us content if God's house be not there—if no place be there for saints to assemble to worship God. In nothing is any part of the earth made more like to heaven, than in having God's house situated on it. The prophet foretold that the mountain of the Lord's house should be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills. Why should it not be accounted the hill of hills, where there is such plenty of all delectable things, where there is such a plenitude of plenty? It is a hill of peace, a hill of joy and hill of life, a hill of glory.<sup>1</sup> We count cities and towns that have kings and noblemen's houses in them happy, by reason of the great provision and all manner of commodities that are brought to them. Much more happy may we account those cities and towns where are many houses of God, if indeed they be true houses of God. External buildings made with stone or brick, timber, lead, iron, and other such materials, though never so pompous and glorious without and within, cannot justly be accounted God's houses, if God's people assemble not in them to worship God, if God's ordinances be not there duly observed, if there be no prayers made to God, no word of God preached, no sacraments administered, no divine discipline exercised in them. But where these are, there are God's houses; and happy are the places where God's houses are.

Ye that desire to dwell in cities or towns, be sure

<sup>1</sup> In molle credentium popularum Iudabo te, predicabo te.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. xxi.*

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 115.

<sup>1</sup> Quidni montium mons ubi tam multiplex omnium delectabilium copia, ubi copiarum omnium plenitudo? Erit enim mons pacis, mons gaudii, mons vite, mons glorie, &c.—*Bar. Strm. de Verbo, Ps. xxiii.*



that God's houses be in those cities or towns. What are best ordered companies without the communion of saints? what the best merchandises without such as are brought from the celestial Canaan? what all sort of wares without such as the wisdom of God setteth out?

And ye that desire to have your houses stand by themselves in the open air, be sure that a house of God be so near them, as on all occasions ye may resort to them. What is the sweetest air without the breath of God's Spirit? What the most fertile soil without the fruitful word of God? What the clearest springs and brooks without the current of grace? What the best grown woods without God's plants? What the most melodious singing of birds without saints singing hymns and spiritual songs, making melody to the Lord in their hearts? What all country or city commodities without divine ordinances? But in God's houses (rightly and justly so called) are all these to be had. There is a kind of fatness of God's house, that is a fulness and sweetness, whereby all that duly frequent the same shall be satisfied. Be therefore, if possibly ye can, where God's house is. 'Blessed are they that dwell there,' Ps. xxxiv. 8, and lxxxiv. 4. The psalmist, in a rhetorical amplification of this point, seemeth to envy the sparrows and swallows which roosted and built their nests about the house of God, whereunto he could not come, though his soul longed and even fainted for it.

Finally, ye that have that favour and honour to dwell where God's house is, esteem it as a great favour and high honour, and testify as much by your answerable carriage.

1. Frequent God's house on all occasions. The Christians of the purer primitive times of the church 'continued daily with one accord in the temple,' Acts ii. 46. This one thing did the man after God's own heart desire, and professeth more and more to seek after it, even 'to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life,' Ps. xxvii. 4; that is, as an inhabitant, to have recourse unto it on all occasions. For, saith he to the Lord, 'I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth,' Ps. xxvi. 8.

2. 'Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God,' Eccles. v. 1; that is, keep thine heart, which

is to thy soul as thy foot to thy body, to carry it this way and that way. Go, therefore, to God's house with a well-prepared heart. There is he present, who searcheth and trieth the heart.

3. At the very entering into God's house let a holy trembling and awful fear possess thy soul. The great God, the King of glory, is there. When Jacob, by a divine vision, which was shewed him in a place where he slept, perceived that 'the Lord was in that place, he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God,' Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

4. When thou art there keep thy thoughts from wandering. Let not thy soul be fixed on any other thing than on God, and his holy ordinances which thou performest, lest thou be reckoned in the number of them 'who draw near to God with their mouth, and with their lips do honour him, but have removed their heart far from him,' Isa. xxix. 13, and so thy service be rejected of God.

5. Profane not God's house with merchandises, for which Christ's indignation was so incensed against the Jews in his time, 'as with a scourge he drave them out,' John ii. 14, &c. Profane it not with worldly communications or actions, much less with any impious or unrighteous words or deeds.

6. Pervert not God's house by making it a pretext for any impiety or iniquity. As if having God's house by thee, thou shouldst thereby be justified, or bolstered up against evil. 'Will ye steal, commit adultery, swear falsely, and walk after other gods; and come and stand before me in this house, saith the Lord, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?' Jer. vii. 9, 10.

Sec. 118. *Of holy boldness in praising God.*

III. *God's praises must be boldly set forth.*<sup>1</sup> We may not be daunted, or ashamed therein, as men which do things secretly in a corner, but by doing this duty in the midst of populous places, manifest holy boldness, as he that said, 'I will praise him among the multitude,' Ps. cxi. 30. 'I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed,' Ps. cxix. 46. 'Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee,' Ps. cxxxviii. 1. Thus St

<sup>1</sup> See. 115.

Paul, though as a malefactor he was brought before king Agrippa and Bernice sitting in great pomp, with Festus, the chief captains, and principal men of the city, Acts xxv. 23; where were great multitudes of people, yet in declaring the admirable work of God in his conversion, saith, 'I speak freely,' Acts xxvi. 26. Herein hath the Lord Christ made himself a worthy pattern: for in this case thus he saith, 'In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation.' Ps. xxii. 22, 25; Heb. ii. 12.

1. Such is the excellency, such the necessity of praising God, so honourable, so acceptable unto God, so useful and beneficial is it to us, by so many bonds are we bound therunto, as if all the things in the world which can be pretended to make any ashamed or afraid thereof, whether reputation, promotion, riches, friends, liberty, life, or anything else, were put into one balance, and the inducements to move us boldly to perform it put into another, they would be found beyond all comparison too light.

2. By saints' boldness in praising God, as they who are like minded are much affected and stirred up to bless God, so the weak and faint-hearted are strengthened and encouraged, and gain-sayers, scornors, and all sorts of adversaries daunted and put to silence.

Great cause of just complaint may hence be taken, not only against impious and profane persons, who care not to give any praise at all to God, either in private corners, or in the midst of assemblies, but also against such as in their judgments are convinced of the equity of the duty, and in their consciences persuaded of the necessity thereof; and thereupon are moved inwardly in their hearts, or secretly in their closets, or other like places, to praise the Lord; but to do it in assemblies, in the midst of populous places, they are ashamed. What is this but to prefer man to God, and applause of men to God's approbation? May it not be said of such, 'They have their reward'! Mat. vi. 2. Surely their own judgment and conscience are terrible witnesses against them. Fearful is the doom which Christ hath denounced against them; for, saith he, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my

words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels,' Mark viii. 38. If therefore we stand before kings and governors for the Lord, we ought not to be ashamed, but resolute and constant.<sup>1</sup>

Be bold, be bold, ye servants of the Lord, in sounding forth the praises of your God. Go into presses of people; and in the midst of them praise the Lord. Wicked men are over-bold in belching forth their blasphemies to the dishonour of God; they care not who hear them. They stieck not to do it in the midst of cities. Shall they be more audacious to dishonour God, than ye zealous to honour him? Assuredly Christ will shew himself as forward to confess you, as you are, or can be to confess him, Mat. x. 32. This holy boldness is the ready way to glory. To add an edge to this exhortation, well observe these few rules following:—

1. Duly consider the difference betwixt God and man. It is disrespect of God, and too much respect of man, that maketh many ashamed and afraid to declare before men that duty which they owe to God, Dan. iii. 16, 17.

2. Take an invincible resolution to do what you see just cause to do, Acts xxi. 13, 14. Want of a settled resolution makes men, when they meet with any discouragements, to turn back, and to cease prosecuting that which in their conceit causeth fear and shame.

3. Pass not for praise or dispraise of men; but 'By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report,' 2 Cor. vi. 8, approve yourselves to be God's servants, bound with the uttermost of your power to set forth his honour. He that said, 'In the midst of the church will I praise thee,' Heb. ii. 12; said also, 'I receive not honour from men,' John v. 41. But 'They which loved the praise of men more than of God, though inwardly they believed in Christ, yet openly durst not confess him,' John xii. 42, 43.

4. Contemn the world. Love of the world quencheth the heat of the love of God. The world is an enticing bait. Many are driven back thereby. Demas, that old disciple Demas, having left his

<sup>1</sup> Si ante reges et presides propter Dominum stemus, non confusi, sed constantes esse debemus.—*Jerome, Comment. in Ps. cxviii.*

heart on the world, which he loved too much, grew ashamed and afraid to confess Christ, 2 Tim. iv. 10.

5. Give not reins to licentiousness. Turn not the grace of God into wantonness, Jude 4. Such unworthy walking of the profession of the gospel cannot but make ashamed to appear in the midst of such congregations as are fit to have God's praises sounded forth among them.

Be not companions with impious and profane persons, Eph. v. 7. They will keep thee out of the midst of the forementioned congregations.

7. Associate yourselves with them that are pious and zealous, Ps. cxxii. 1, that are not ashamed themselves in the most solemn manner that they can to praise God. Such companions will put life into you, and provoke you to do as they do. In them especially are these proverbs verified, 'As iron sharpeneth iron, so man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man,' Prov. xxvii. 17, 19.

#### Sec. 119. *Of delighting in God's house.*

IV. *Our delight must be in God's church.*<sup>1</sup> It was usual with the prophets familiarly with much delight to direct their speeches to Jerusalem and to Zion as types of God's church, after this manner, 'Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem,' Ps. cxxii. 2; 'I will seek thy good,' ver. 9. 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy,' Ps. cxxxvii. 5, 6. Then especially did they cheerfully manifest their mind to her when they had good tidings to tell her, thus, 'Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city,' &c., Isa. lii. 1. 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee,' &c., Zech. ix. 9. In her misery they could not refrain tears; for thus they say, 'We wept when we remembered Zion,' Ps. cxxxvii. 1. 'Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people,' Lam. ii. 11. This compassion in misery is a great evidence of much love and delight, where-

upon it is said, 'Thy servants take pleasure in thy stones, and favour the dust thereof,' Ps. cii. 14. Yet a greater evidence thereof are the many passionate words which are used in reference to her, as love of her, Ps. xxvi. 8; desiring and longing after her, Ps. xxvii. 1; fainting for her, Ps. lxxxiv. 2; rejoicing and glorying in her, Ps. cvi. 5.

All things that may work true delight are in the church. Therefore the Holy Ghost hath set her forth by most amiable titles and ornaments, as queen, king's daughter, Ps. xlv. 9, 13; virgin, Jer. xxxi. 4; bride adorned for her husband, Rev. xxi. 2; spouse, Cant. iv. 8; wife, Rev. xix. 8; fairest of women, Cant. i. 8; 'all glorious within, her clothing also of wrought gold,' Ps. xlv. 13. Within the church is adorned with the dignity of her husband.<sup>1</sup>

In the temple, which was a type of the church, typically were prefigured such things as are of force to draw a man's mind and heart thenceunto.

1. God did there in a most gracious manner represent himself sitting on a 'mercy-seat,' Exod. xxv. 22. So as in the church is 'a throne of grace whereunto we may go boldly, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,' Heb. iv. 16.

2. Under this mercy-seat was an 'ark,' Exod. xxv. 21, which, being a kind of chest, prefigured that in the church are all God's treasures to be had. Christ is this ark. 'In him are hid all God's treasures,' Col. ii. 3.

3. There was a high priest, who appeared before that mercy-seat 'to hear the names of the children of Israel for a memorial before the Lord continually,' Exod. xxviii. 29, and 'to make an atonement for all the congregation of Israel,' Lev. xvi. 17. Christ Jesus is that true High Priest, who continually 'appeareth in the presence of God for us,' Heb. ix. 24, and 'is the true propitiation for our sins,' 1 John ii. 2.

4. There was an 'altar for all manner of offerings,' Exod. xxxviii. 1, &c., and 'for sweet incense,' chap. xxx. 1, &c.; prefiguring that God, who accepteth the sacrifice of his Son for our sins, accepteth our freewill-offerings, and by the sweet savour of the incense of Christ's intercession is well pleased therewith.

5. There was a 'table,' Exod. xxv. 23, to pre-

<sup>1</sup> Intrinsicus sui viri dignitate ornata est Ecclesia.—*Aug. advers. Jud.*, lib. i. cap. 22.

figure a holy communion 'betwixt the Lord and his people,' Luke xxii. 30.

6. There were 'lights,' Exod. xxv. 37; 'bread,' ver. 30; 'water,' chap. xxx. 18, &c.; to shew that in the church there are means to enlighten us, to feed us, to cleanse us, and to do all things requisite for us.

7. Out of the outward court there was passage into the 'holy place,' chap. xxvi., and out of it into the *sanctum sanctorum*, the most holy place, to shew that first we must be in the church, in the number of those who profess the true religion, so may we come by the grace of effectual calling to be priests unto God, and having served our time, to enter into the true heavenly holy place.

Not without cause, therefore, doth the psalmist style the church, 'The place where God's honour dwelleth,' Ps. xxvi. 8.<sup>1</sup> He thought it not enough to say, 'The place where God dwelleth, but where his honour dwelleth, which maketh much to the glory of the church.'

Do not these things make the church worthy to be sought after, to be loved, to be delighted in? Many many more are the prerogatives thereof which make it most amiable; but these may be sufficient to such as are not of a stoical disposition, very blocks, sensible of no delightsome object.

The affection of our prophet towards Jerusalem, the church of God, is even for imitation worthy of all due observation; that our hearts also may be so enamoured with her as not to think or speak of her but with delight.

For this purpose two points shall briefly be declared:—

1. How such a delight may be wrought.
2. How it may be manifested.

I. To work it—

1. Be well instructed in those privileges and prerogatives which make the church worthy to be delighted in. Thus will thy delight be more solid and stable.

2. Oft meditate thereon, so will thy delight be more inflamed. Serious meditation on that which works affection is as bellows to a fire, it enkindles it, and makes it flame out.

<sup>1</sup> Non sufficit dicere, locus habitationis Dei, sed locus habitationis glorie Dei.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. xxv.*

3. Withdraw thy heart from other contrary objects which work a corrupt delight therein. As the heart of him that is set on strange women will thereby be alienated from his wife; so delight in the world and the vanities thereof will dim, yea, clean put out our delight in the church.

II. To manifest thy delight in the church—

1. Be a member of that blessed communion.
2. Be a companion of the other members thereof.
3. Let her praises be ever in thy mouth.
4. Pray for her peace.
5. Seek her good.
6. Rejoice in her prosperity.
7. Mourne for her misery.

See. 120. *Of provoking others to praise God.*

Ver. 19. *Praise ye the Lord.*

The prophet having abundantly testified his own readiness and forwardness to praise the Lord, contenteth not himself therewith, but, that the more praise might redound to God, in the close of his hymn he stirreth up others, even all of all sorts, without any limitation or exception of any, to do the like, in this compound word, 'Praise ye the Lord.'<sup>1</sup>

Of the duty implied in this phrase, which is to praise the Lord, sufficient has been spoken before. It remaineth here to speak of the means of spreading abroad and propagating the praise of God, by inciting others to praise him. This exhortation being added to his profession, two useful observations hence arise.

I. We must provoke others to praise God.

II. We must ourselves practise what we provoke others unto.

1. For the first, the duty of provoking others is in Scripture applied to all points of piety, justice, and charity; for what we find behoeful for ourselves to do, we must thereunto incite others. In general, therefore, it is said, 'Consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works,' Heb. x. 24; 'Exhort one another,' chap. iii. 13; 'Edify one another,' 1 Thes. v. 11. But more particularly for inciting others to praise God, as other books of Scripture, so

<sup>1</sup> Of this word, see 'The Whole Armour of God,' treat. iii. part ii. sec. 72. Exhortamur vos, fratres, ut laudetis Deum, et hoc est quod vobis omnibus dicimus, quando dicimus Alleluia, &c.—*Aug. Enar. in Ps. clviii.*

especially the book of Psalms doth abound with incitations thereto, stirring up angels, kings, princes, judges, priests, Levites, Ps. cxlviii., cxxxv. 19, &c., cxlix., cl., old, young, male, female, all of all sorts, yea, by a rhetorical apostrophe he turns his speech unto unreasonable and senseless creatures, and calls on them to praise the Lord, thereby the more to quicken sensible and reasonable creatures thereunto. The 136th Psalm was purposely penned, and appointed to be sung time after time, both daily in the temple, 1 Chron. xvi. 41, 2 Chron. v. 13, and vii. 3, 6, and on extraordinary occasions, chap. xx. 21, Ezra iii. 11, to incense the spirits mutually of one another to praise God. The celestial spirits, (though they be every one most forward to praise the Lord, and need no incitation, yet) to shew their earnest and insatiable desire to have it continually done by all, they cry one to another, 'Hallelujah, praise ye the Lord.' Rev. xix. 1, 3, 4, 6. When we receive a good turn from man, we use to stir up others to thank him in our behalf; much more ought we to invite and incite others to praise God with us and for us.<sup>1</sup>

The zeal we ought to bear to God's glory, the love we owe to our brethren, the comfort that we reap to our own souls, by provoking others to praise the Lord, are as a threefold twisted cord to hold us fast to the performance of this duty.

1. The more persons are brought to praise the Lord, the more is God's name hallowed. Now, it is an evidence of a great zeal of God's glory, not only with the uttermost of our own power to praise him ourselves, but also to be a means to draw on others so to do; as he that said, 'I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever,' Ps. xlv. 17.

2. It is an evidence of much love to our brethren to incite them to praise the Lord, both in regard of the great need wherein they stand thereof, and also in regard of the great benefit they may reap thereby. All have great need to be daily stirred up to this duty, by reason of their natural backwardness thereunto.

<sup>1</sup> Cum ab hominibus beneficium accepimus, alios quoque provocamus ad communem gratiarum actionem, multo magis ad Deum invitandi sunt, qui pro nobis gratias agant.—*Chryss.*, hom. ii., in 2 Cor. 1.

The more excellent any duty is, the more backward we are by nature thereunto; but of all duties, none more excellent, none more divine, none wherein we come nearer unto the celestial spirits, than this of praising God, which maketh our earthly, perverse disposition to be so dull to it as it is. Can heavy things of the earth be forward to ascend upward? But in praising God our spirits ascend to heaven, where God is. Hence, also, is it that, though we are at some times quick and forward thereunto, yet we soon wax dull therein, and, as it were, fall downward, as heavy weights, which, though they be pulled up, by their own heaviness fall down again; or as water, which, though with fire it be heated, of its own nature waxeth cold again. Therefore, as weights are oft to be pulled up, as fire is oft to be put under water and blown up, so our spirits are oft to be quickened and stirred up by mutual cohortations. The benefit whereof is very great, by reason of the true virtue and efficacy of incitations. As soldiers, even fresh-water soldiers, and all that strive for masteries by running, riding, rowing, shooting, wrestling, &c., are much animated and whetted on by acclamations and incitations, so Christians, by holy exhortations, are much quickened to praise the Lord.

3. We give evidence to others, and gain assurance to ourselves, of the spirit of grace abiding and bearing rule in us, by drawing on others with us to praise the Lord. This spirit is called the 'anointing,' 1 John ii. 20, 27. It is as an 'ointment poured forth,' Cant. i. 3, which so diffuseth the sweetness of the savour that is in it, as all that are near it carry away some of the sweetness of it. And is it not a great comfort to have assurance of such a spirit? What now can be more blessed than not only to glorify the good God with our own tongues, but also to stir up others by our means to glorify him?<sup>2</sup>

Certainly these, with other like motives, were of force with him who said to God 'I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart: I have declared thy faithfulness, and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation,' Ps. xl. 10. And again, 'I will declare

<sup>2</sup> Quid beatius nobis foret, si glorificemus non solum linguis nostris bonum Deum, sed ut proximos quoque ut nostro nomine eum glorificent, incitemus.—*Chryss.*, hom. 27, in Gen. viii.

thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people,' Ps. xxii. 22.

The application of this point concerns all of all sorts. Especially it concerns ministers, to whom are committed in a peculiar manner the words of exhortation. The priests and Levites, Ps. cxxxv. 2, 3, 19, 20; 2 Chron. vii. 6, were of all most of all bound, as to praise the Lord themselves, so in the midst of great assemblies to incite others, and to sing and say, 'Praise ye the Lord.' Next to ministers, magistrates, who are as generals and captains in the Lord's army, are bound, by virtue of their authority over others, to provoke them to praise the Lord. Thus 'Moses and the children of Israel,' Exod. xv. 1, not he alone, but he with them, he directing and inciting them, 'sang unto the Lord.' So Deborah and Barak said to the people, 'Praise ye the Lord,' Judges v. 1. The like I might instance in David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Nehemiah, and other pious magistrates. And because governors of families, whether husbands, parents, or masters, are in their houses as kings and priests, to them also it belongs to see that such as are under their charge do praise the Lord. Thus Elkanah, 1 Sam. i. 7, for this very end, took his wives along with him when he went to the temple. Thus, for this very end also, Jacob, Gen. xxxv. 2, calleth upon his whole household, wives, children, servants, and all that were with him, to prepare themselves solemnly to praise the Lord. And Joshua, chap. xxiv. 15, undertaketh for himself and his household, to 'serve the Lord.' Finally, it appertaineth to neighbours, friends, and all sorts even of private Christians, by virtue of the common bond of nature whereby all are 'one flesh,' Isa. lviii. 7, and that nearer bond of spiritual union whereby all are 'one body,' 1 Cor. xii. 12. For these mutual duties of exhorting one another, of provoking one another, of edifying one another, before mentioned, are not restrained to any particular sorts or kinds of people, but extended to all sorts. This was wont to be the saints' phrase, 'O come, let us sing unto the Lord,' Ps. xcv. 1. And as a property of all that are of the Christian church, it was of old foretold, that 'many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,' &c., Isa. ii. 3. This

is an especial means of promoting and advancing God's glory, to do it by many tongues.<sup>1</sup> They which are guided by Satan's spirit have their 'Come:' their mutual cohortations and provocations. They use to say, one to another, 'Come ye, we will fill ourselves with strong drink,' Isa. lvi. 12; 'Come with us, let us all have one purse,' Prov. i. 11, 14; 'Come, let us take our fill of love,' chap. vii. 18. Hence is it that the number of wicked ones so increaseth, that they are so audacious and impudent in their courses, and that they carry all before them, as a violent stream, occasioned by the gathering together of many waters. They do, without all question, aggravate their condemnation hereby; yet do they hereby become witnesses against many that profess themselves to be the servants of God, in that the spirit of Satan which ruleth in them is more effectual in them to advance Satan's throne, than the Spirit of grace, in many of them which profess themselves to be the servants of God, to promote the glory of God.

But as for such as are willing and forward to give evidence of their zeal of God's glory, of their love to their brethren, and of that assurance they have of the reign of the Spirit of grace in them, by inciting others to praise the Lord, let them well note the next doctrine.

Sec. 121. *Of practising ourselves what we provoke others unto.*

II. *We must ourselves practise what we provoke others unto.*<sup>2</sup> We may, and must, as we heard in the former section, desire saints to give thanks for us, but wistful we may not fail ourselves mutually to give thanks for ourselves and praise the Lord. So did this prophet, as we have seen at large from the beginning of the 12th verse to this last clause of this psalm. Observe the patterns of such as in Scripture are approved for their zeal in stirring up others, and you shall find them forward to do themselves what they incited others unto. 'We will arise and go to Bethel,' &c., saith Jacob, Gen. xxxv. 3. 'As for me and my house,' saith Joshua, chap.

<sup>1</sup> Ista est clarissima Dei magnificentio quando per innumeram linguam glorificationem offerimus.—*Chrys.*, hom. 26, in Gen. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Obsecratus sanctos ut pro nobis gratias agant, et ipsi pro nobis hoc agamus mutuo.—*Chrys.*, hom. 2, in 2 Cor. i.

xxiv. 15, 'we will serve the Lord.' It is a usual phrase of such as heartily desire to advance the glory of God to express their desire in the first person of the plural number, whereby they shew that they intend themselves to do what they require of others, and therefore incite themselves as well as others, thus, 'Let us offer to God the sacrifice of praise continually,' Heb. xiii. 15; 'Let us sing unto the Lord,' Ps. xcv. 1; 'Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,' Isa. ii. 3; 'We will praise thy name, O God, for ever, Ps. xlv. 8; 'We will give thee thanks for ever,' Ps. lxxix. 13; 'We will shew forth thy praise. Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, do we give thanks,' Ps. lxxv. 1.

1. Thus, our care to stir up others to praise God will indeed appear to arise from a true zeal of God's glory, from true Christian love, and from the Spirit of grace dwelling in us, when we ourselves do what we persuade others unto.

2. Thus shall we add an edge to the exhortations we give others, when they see us leading the way before them. If soldiers see their captains forward to those enterprises wherunto they incite them, they will be much more encouraged and heartened thereunto. Wherewith can a physician better persuade a patient to observe the diet which he prescribes, than by observing it himself?

3. Refusing to practise ourselves what we exhort others to do, maketh our exhortations to be profitable neither to others nor to ourselves.

Not to others, because the edge of our exhortations must needs be much blunted thereby; for people will be ready to say, 'Physician, heal thyself.' Luke iv. 23. Hardly will they be brought to think that we speak to them from our hearts, or that we ourselves are well persuaded of the equity, excellency, necessity and benefit of that wherunto we persuade them.

Not to ourselves, because thus they are made evidences against us, witnessing that we knew the right course which we refused to take; whereby we make ourselves worthy of 'more stripes,' Luke xii. 47, and aggravate our damnation.

4. This great mischief, beside many others, riseth from not practising what we persuade others to, that impious men's mouths are opened to disgrace our profession, and blaspheme the name of our God, 'Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thy-

self? The name of God is blasphemed through you,' Rom. ii. 21, 24.

Ye, therefore, that desire to manifest a true intention of heart in advancing the glory of God after the best manner that you can, and to give proof that a holy zeal of God's glory possesseth your soul, and setteth you on work to do what you do in inciting others to praise the Lord; ye that desire to have your pious endeavours therein to be of good use, not to prove frustrate and vain, but to be effectual to the end you aim at; ye that would not pull down with one hand what you seem to build up with another—nor afford occasion to them whom you stir up to so weighty and bounden a duty, to think that by-respects move you to incite them in that wherein ye yourselves are so cold and careless; ye that would have comfort in performing so warrantable and profitable a duty; take due notice of the direction here prescribed. Upon your own performance (as the psalmist here doth) provoke others to be followers of you, and to do as you do. First say, and say it from the heart to him that searcheth the heart, in truth to him that desireth truth in the inward parts—say unto the Lord, 'I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving;' and then say unto others, 'Praise ye the Lord.'

Oh that ministers, magistrates, governors of families, and all that have either function or disposition to call upon others to praise the Lord, would first take notice of the many just and weighty occasions that themselves have to praise him, and answerably bind themselves so to do, and be careful to perform what they are bound to perform, having their own hearts filled with matter of praises, and their mouths wide opened to utter the same; so might they with much courage and confidence speak to others and say, 'Praise ye the Lord.'

#### Sec. 122. *Of God's present mercies to England.*

For a particular application of the general sum and scope of the psalm, and of the two last mentioned duties of praising God ourselves, and of provoking others so to do, let us take a view of the special occasions which the Lord doth now, even at this present time, give us to quicken our own and others' spirits to render all possible thanks unto him

for his unspeakable blessings on our own and other nations.

1. We here in England do still enjoy the great blessing of peace, together with that far greater blessing, the gospel of peace, and a free use of all God's holy ordinances requisite for our spiritual edification and eternal salvation.

At this time this blessing ought to be the more highly esteemed, because it is in a manner proper to us. For most of the parts of Christendom are now, or lately have been, exceedingly annoyed with bloody war.

Of this blessing, Scotland, Ireland, and all the parts of his most excellent majesty our sovereign lord King Charles, do partake.

Of the benefit of this blessing I have elsewhere treated; so as here I need no longer to insist upon it.<sup>1</sup>

2. The last year there was great scarcity of corn everywhere in this land. Corn rose to a greater price than hath been known in our memories. And where in former times supply in like cases hath been made by the plenty of other countries, all the nations round about us were pinched with penury; so as there was too great cause of fearing a famine.

But the Lord was pleased to hear the heavens, whereupon the heavens heard the earth, and the earth heard the corn, the grass, and all manner of fruits, and they heard England, and the cry of the poor therein.

Thus by the divine providence our land brought forth such a plentiful harvest, and the heavens afforded so fair a season for gathering it in, as scarcity is turned into plenty, dearth into cheapness. Our floors are now full of wheat; we eat in plenty and are satisfied.

The misery of famine giveth sufficient proof of the great benefit of plenty.

3. There was also the last year great fear of much sickness, and that of the infectious, pestilentious sickness which some few years before had, month after month, week after week, day after day, destroyed such multitudes, as the fear of the return thereof was the more terrible.

Physicians gave up their opinion that the air was infected.

The famous university of Cambridge was so smitten

therewith as for the space of half a year and more colleges were dissolved, students dispersed, readings and acts intermitted, that populous place made desolate, and the poor that remained much pinched with poverty.

Other great market towns round about in the country were also the last year much infected with the plague; and many people were thereby destroyed, or brought into great exigencies.

But now hath the Lord healed our land; sickness is removed, and health restored to our borders.

If the miserable desolation that the plague maketh in many places—taking away magistrates from their subjects, ministers from their people, husbands and wives one from another, parents from children, children from parents, dear friends, helpful neighbours, one from another, and then especially depriving persons of the comfort of their best friends when they stand in most need of them; if (I say) the miserable condition occasioned by the plague be well weighed, we shall find our deliverance and freedom from the same to be a great blessing.

To amplify this blessing the more, God's more than ordinary providence, not only in abating the violence of that extraordinary sickness which in the year 1625 so fiercely raged, but also in his speedy suppressing and utter removing it, is frequently and seriously to be considered. A distinct narration thereof is before set down.<sup>1</sup>

The more terrible the three evil arrows of war, famine, and plague are, the more remarkable are the blessings of peace, plenty, and health.

4. We in our days have such a blessing conferred upon us as hath not fallen out in England fourscore and thirteen years before, which is the birth of a prince, heir to the crown.<sup>2</sup> Blessed in this respect be the nine and twentieth day of May 1630. On that day was Prince Charles born.

From the 12th of October 1537, whereon Prince Edward (who was Edward VI. King of England) was born, to the said 29th of May 1630, England was not honoured with such a blessing. This is an incomparable blessing to this present age, and to future ages also, as we steadfastly hope, and from our hearts, with the most humble devotion and the most earnest affection that we can, we daily pray.

<sup>1</sup> See 'The Church's Conquest,' sec. 96.

<sup>2</sup> See 31.

<sup>2</sup> The birth of Prince Charles.



Sec. 123. *Of the present liberty of the reformed churches in France.*

Christian charity requireth that we be affected with the blessings conferred on others, especially such as are of the same faith and profession that we are. Let us, therefore, cast our eyes on other churches and their present condition, which, if we duly observe, we shall find God's gracious providence to be more than ordinarily extended towards them in these our days.

We will begin with the reformed churches in France.

When Henry IV., styled the Great, deceased, by that favour he had shewed and peace he had given to those of the reformed religion in his kingdom, they were made so safe and secure, in man's opinion, as it was supposed that no power was able to wrest their liberty from them.

They had above two hundred walled and fenced towns for their refuge and safety.

Many of the greatest nobility in France were their partisans, and seemed most affectionate to the religion.

They had troops and armies of men well disciplined in arms, with many brave commanders and old-beaten soldiers.

They were well provided with all store of ammunition. Nothing requisite for defence and safety was wanting, in man's imagination.

It is to be feared that they were too confident in the arm of flesh: which that they might the more thoroughly discern, the Lord withdrew his protection, and left them to defend themselves against the power of their own sovereign, which at first they too much slighted.

Soon after that their now sovereign had raised and brought his forces against them, many of their chiefest commanders revolted, their soldiers were slain, their treasures exhausted, their cities and towns of defence were violently wrested from them or treacherously given up, many bloody massacres were made among them, and the miserable effects of war so depopulated their country and destroyed their persons, as they were left destitute, without all succour or hope of relief. And since the last taking in of Rochelle, the king, who was of a contrary

religion to them, became an absolute master of them.

What now in man's eye could be looked for but that utterly they should be deprived of the liberty of their religion, and by little and little be enforced to the idolatrous superstition of the Romish church, or at least be bred up in blindness and ignorance, being left without the light of the gospel to guide and comfort them in that their miserable condition?

Yet now in these happy days of deliverances, behold how in their greatest extremity, when all human means failed them, the Lord of hosts hath beyond all hope afforded them much peace and quietness, and provided for them new churches, built with their king's good leave, yea, and at his cost and charges, because they had been demolished by the fury of impious soldiers, and by the outrage of superstitious people.

Through that liberty which now they enjoy, their churches are diligently frequented, and all God's ordinances duly observed, and their religion with less scorn and derision professed than formerly.

Their peace and security is now greater than when they had the forementioned means to embolden them to stand upon their own guard.

This is the Lord's doing. It is marvellous in our eyes.

They had no Moses, no Joshua, to work for them.

As they had no power within to defend them from the might and malice of their enemy, so they could expect no aid from abroad to encourage them to stand out against their enemies. All the aid that from abroad was afforded unto them proved altogether in vain.

God is all in all to them. He that said, 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them: and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den,' Isa. xi. 6, &c., hath wrought this concord betwixt them and the adversaries of their religion.

'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he

will,' Prov. xxi. 1. To his churches, therefore, hath the Lord turned the heart of that king for their good.

What the inward affection of the king to those of the reformed religion is, is a secret. Whether the peace that those churches enjoy be occasioned by reason of that supreme power, which now he hath obtained over them, or by reason of his embroilments at home and undertakings abroad, little skilleth for the matter in hand. Sure it is that the Lord hath ordered all things that have fallen out in France for the good and peace of his churches there.

Should not due notice be taken hereof?

Sec. 124. *Of God's late mercies to the Low Countries.*

From reformed churches in France we will pass to the Low Countries, who are of the same profession.

In recounting God's late mercies to them, (which is the task that we have undertaken, thereby to shew what great cause we now have to set out the praises of the Lord,) it would be too far a digression to begin with those extraordinary deliverances which they had when first they recovered their liberty against the cruelty and tyranny of Duke d'Alva.

Later mercies are these that follow.

1. A strong faction of Arminians being raised up, and dispersed throughout all their provinces, whereby the truth and purity of religion was much corrupted, and the tranquillity and security of their state put into great hazard, a National Synod, not without the counsel and consent of our royal Defender of the Faith, King James, was assembled at Dort, wherunto most grave, learned, and judicious divines, out of all the reformed churches in Christendom, came, who, all with one unanimous consent, determined sundry fundamental points of our Christian religion against the contrary errors of the adversaries of God's free grace,—a mercy not to be forgotten.

2. The enemy having gathered such an army as made him master of the field, whereby he so strongly besieged Broda, (a frontier town of great command every way round about,) as no succour could be afforded it, but it was forced to yield; at which

time also Grave Maurice, Prince of Orange, their brave general, died. Great fear there was of much mischief, if not of utter ruin, to befall that state; but, by God's providence, their great enemy Spinola was called into another country, and a supply made of the loss of their former general by substituting in his room his own brother, whose prudence and prowess success hath crowned; so as they are now better secured than they were before.

3. Spain provided an exceeding great treasure for the foresaid States, which it never intended to them. The whole fleet of gold, silver, and other rich merchandises which the Spaniards, by the help of the West Indians, had been sundry years gathering together, the Netherlanders took on a sudden; whereby their enemies were much disarmed, and they themselves so plentifully furnished, as they were the better enabled, not only to defend themselves, but also to offend their enemies.

4. The States being now well prepared, they quickly become masters of the field, and with much resolution attempt that which the enemy little feared they should attain; namely, to take in the Bosche, a very strong frontier town, well fenced, well manned, and every way well prepared and provided for. But they so besiege it, as no relief can be afforded to it; they so assault it, as there is no standing out against them; they take it, and keep it.

5. While they lay at this siege, another booty falls into their hands. Wesell, the magazine of their enemy, wherein all warlike provision was in great abundance stored up, sending out some of their garisons abroad, notice thereof comes to the army of the States in siege at the Bosche, they forthwith send some troops to surprise Wesell on a sudden; they come to it unexpected, and quickly take it. Thus are the States again furnished with their enemy's provision; they take a strong town of great consequence, which is as an inlet for them into the Palatinate; and by this means an enemy that, with a great army, was entered into their country, and burned and spoiled all before him, was forced back again.

6. This last year, while the army of the States is quiet at home, the enemy having plotted some mischievous design against them, unexpectedly sends an army by water into their territories, which (like

a flock of foolish birds) flew into nets that were not laid for them, and were taken.

What can we think, but that the finger of God hath been in the ordering of these successful matters, for the better security of them who profess and maintain the true religion against the professed enemies thereof?

Sec. 125. *Of the seasonable succour afforded to oppressed Germany.*

Among other evidences of the divine providence towards the reformed churches, the late seasonable succour afforded to the churches in Germany is most remarkable.

Many years together hath Germany been sore vexed with intestine and civil war.

Who can without a melting heart think on the much blood that hath been spilt; the ruins of many fair cities, towns, castles, churches, and other edifices that have been made; the distresses that many exiles of all sorts, princes and subjects, noble and mean, clergy and laity, male and female, old and young, have been brought unto; the miserable bondage under which such as have remained in their own territories and habitations have groaned; the heavy and undue taxes that have been laid on such as have not had their titles, dignities, inheritances, callings, and liberties by violence wrested from them: who can without much compunction and compassion hear of or think on those and many other pressures and oppressions?

The princes of the reformed churches in Germany<sup>1</sup> were forced to put up a joint complaint and remonstrance of their grievances, and to consult about means, at least of some ease (for their burdens were intolerable) if not of full redress.

But their complaints proved like to the complaints of the Israelites put up to Pharaoh for easing their heavy burdens. 'Their savour thereby came to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants,' Exod. v. 21. They were in a worse case than before.

So proud was the enemy by reason of the great armies that he had gathered together, and so flushed he was in the conquests that he had made, as he re-

<sup>1</sup> See the narration of the Protestants' Diet at Leipsig, Feb. 8, 1631.

garded no complaints, he feared no revenge. He deemed his power to be invincible.

When thus the reformed churches in Germany were brought to the lowest ebb, and so near to the pit's brink as they were upon tumbling down to their utter ruin, that man's extremity might appear to be God's opportunity, in a most seasonable time the Lord raised up, and sent unto them a deliverer, Gustavus of Sued, in whose title is couched Augustus and Deus: Gustavus importing, by transposition of letters, *Augustus*; and Sued, read backward, *Deus*.

If the small army with which he came into Germany, and the great things which he hath done since he came thither, be duly weighed, we shall see cause to acknowledge that the Lord of hosts was with him.

That which is by experience noted of the snow, that by being tumbled up and down, of a little ball it comes to be a great heap that can hardly be stirred, is likewise by experience found verified in his army.

We read of a dream, Judges vii. 13, &c., which a soldier of the huge host of the 'Midianites, that for multitude was as the sand by the sea-side,' thus related to his fellow, 'I dreamed a dream, and lo, a cake of barley-bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it, that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along.' The interpretation, which in the event proved true, was this, 'This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.'

A fit allusion thereunto, which hath likewise in the event proved to be most true, may be this; the sword of the king of Sued, a defender of the true religion, hath smitten the armies of the enemies of the gospel; and into his hand hath the Lord delivered his church's enemies.

This king proves to be as another Cyrus, 'the Lord's anointed, whose right hand the Lord hath holden to subdue nations before him. He shall perform the Lord's pleasure,' Isa. xlv. 1, and xlv. 28.

Cyrus, the Persian monarch, though he were to admiration victorious, yet did he not with such expedition gain in and bring under his power so many forts, castles, walled towns and cities, every way well manned, fenced, and fortified, (no, nor that

hammer of the world, great Alexander,) as this anointed of the Lord hath done in so short a time.

The enemy spent more years in subduing cities and towns in Germany, than this deliverer hath spent months in reducing them.

Conquering Cæsar came even into this country whereinto victorious Gustavus is come, and with such celerity subdued one principality after another, as the orator is bold to say that he passed over places by victories more speedily than another could have done by paces.<sup>1</sup> This is indeed a hyperbolic speech, but yet thereby exceeding great celerity is set out; which also is implied by another hyperbolic phrase used by Cæsar himself in a letter to his friend, in these three words, *Veni, vidi, vici*, I came, I saw, I overcame,—meaning thereby that so soon as he came to a place, and took a view of it, he forthwith took it.

Yet in much shorter time hath Gustavus subdued and taken in more towns and cities than Cæsar did, and that after another manner than Cæsar did.

Had Cæsar when he came into Germany such an adversary as Tilly?

Were there raised such armies of men and horse against Cæsar as against Gustavus?

Were there such garrisons, such ammunition, such provision of all things requisite to repel an enemy, in the places which Cæsar subdued, as in those which Gustavus took?

Never did Cæsar, at least for the time that he was in Germany, meet with so strong opposition as Gustavus hath met withal.

Never was that general brought unto such hazards as this king hath been brought unto.

In no part of Germany did Cæsar ever meet with such a pitched field or such a set battle, as Gustavus did on God's Acre, near Leipzig. Nor ever was a battle maintained with such prudence and providence, with such courage and constancy, against an enemy that was so strong and stout, so seldom foiled, so much prevailing; against an army supposed invincible by reason of former successes and present preparations; against all the advantages that an enemy could desire, as the battle at Leipzig by valorous Gustavus. And all this after a great,

<sup>1</sup> Nec citius enjunctam passibus quam suis victoriis, &c.—*Cic. Orat., pro M. Marcel. Plut. in vit. Cæs.*

if not the greater part, of his own army was put to rout, and the enemy thereupon made so confident, as he cried, Victory, victory, follow, follow; but with such success as the Benjamites had, when in the beginning of the battle they had smitten the Israelites, and thereupon cried, 'They are smitten down before us,' Judges xx. 32, &c.

On the seventh day of September, the birthday of victorious Queen Elizabeth, was this never-to-be-forgotten victory obtained. And on the seventeenth day of November, the coronation-day of the said puissant princess, was the high and mighty king of Sweden entertained in the imperial city of Frankfort-on-Maine, the city where the German emperor useth to be elected.

Since the forenamed incomparable victory at Leipzig, all things with very good success have fallen out.

Sec. 126. *Of the causes of the Swedish king's entering into Germany.*

The conquests made by the victorious king of Sweden are in their kind very glorious; but much more glorious in the cause of undertaking them.

All confess that it is not so much the punishment that maketh martyrdom glorious, as the cause.<sup>1</sup>

So is it in war. The cause rather than the event makes it warrantable and praiseworthy. Good success in just war brings much glory to the undertakers thereof.

In this respect victorious Gustavus carrieth away more glory than Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar, or other the great conquerors among the heathen.

Of those conquerors who are commended by the Holy Ghost, it is said that they 'subdued kingdoms' and 'wrought righteousness.'

Might and right must go together. Right without might may be much wronged. Might without right may do much wrong.

Take we therefore a brief view of the causes of sundry other conquerors, and we shall find might without right.

Take we a view of the causes which moved the conquering king of Sweden to undertake his wars, and we shall find might regulated by right.

<sup>1</sup> Causa non poena facit martyrem.—*Aug., epist. 61.*

The cause which moved conquering monarchs in former times to enter into other men's dominions and to subdue nations, was especially the pride of their heart, and their ambition to have the supreme sovereignty over the whole world, if possibly they could achieve it.

It is said of Alexander the Great, that when he heard the philosopher's conclusion concerning the unity of the world, he wept because there were no more worlds for him to overcome. Behold the ambition of men's minds, how boundless, how unsatiable it is!

The forementioned Caesar invaded Germany, France, England, and other nations, to enlarge the dominion of the Roman empire. So did other Roman generals before and after Caesar.

True it is that God in his unsearchable wisdom stirred up many of them to be his instruments to punish people's rebellion against God. In which respect they are called the 'rod' of the Lord, Isa. x. 5; his 'staff,' Jer. xii. 12; his 'sword,' Ezek. xxx. 24. Yea, God is said to put 'his sword into their hands;' and because the Lord useth them as his instruments, they are in that respect styled 'the Lord's anointed,' Isa. xlv. 1; his 'servants,' Jer. xxv. 9; his 'shepherds,' Isa. xlv. 28. Yet notwithstanding this secret intent of the Lord, which he by their ministry brought to pass, they were stirred up by pride and ambition to do what they did. So saith the Lord of Asshur, 'O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, &c. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, &c. I will give him a charge to take the spoil, &c. Howbeit he meaneth not so, &c. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom,' &c. Isa. x. 5-7, 13. And further to shew that they by their inward wicked disposition were set on work, it is said 'that when God gave people into their hands they shewed them no mercy,' Isa. xlvii. 6; and again, when 'the Lord was a little displeased they helped forward the affliction,' Zech. i. 15.

But the pious and righteous king of Sweden hath made it manifest to all the world, that no ambitious thoughts, no desire of enlarging his own dominions by forcing away other men's rights from them, hath embroiled him in these German wars.

Great wrongs were done to him by the enemy,

and fear given of greater, if he looked not the better to himself. So as he was forced to take up arms to secure his own dominions and his neighbours' bordering upon him.

It is noted of the Philistines that 'they came up to seek David,' 2 Sam. v. 17. Whereby is implied that they first provoked him to war; and his setting upon them and destroying them is thereby justified.

It is also recorded of the Syrians that they helped the Ammonites, who had most despitely used David's ambassadors,' 2 Sam. x. 4, &c. Thereby David's warring against the Ammonites and Syrians is justified. Against the Ammonites for wrong done to David; against the Syrians for aiding David's enemies.

Such provocations had king Gustavus to enter upon these latter wars. He was first fought by the enemy. His ambassadors were basely used. This latter enemy sent armies under his own ensigns in aid of the Pole, his former enemy, with whom he was then in war.

Besides these wrongs done to himself, complaints and invitations were made to him by sundry oppressed princes and states, and particularly of those to whom he was engaged by ancient alliances and confederacies. By these also he was drawn into these wars, wherein the divine providence hath given him so good success and so great glory.

Abraham, Gen. xiv. 14, on such a ground as this latter is, was moved to take up arms against those that spoiled Sodom where his brother Lot was; wherein the Lord gave him good success.

Joshua also on such a ground made war against the five kings of the Amorites, who encamped against Gibeon, Josh. x. 6, &c. The Gibeonites were at that time in league with the Israelites. Thereupon Gibeon being invaded by the Amorites, sends unto Joshua to the camp, saying, 'Slack not thy hand from thy servants, come up to us quickly and save us and help us.'

Thus Gustavus in affording succour to such as were oppressed and craved his aid, they being also his confederates, hath done that which such as were guided by God's Spirit have done before him; and that as well for securing his own dominions, as for relieving others. For had that flood of war, which overflowed, and in a manner ruined, the greater

part of Germany, been suffered to swell and run longer and further, it might have made an irrecoverable breach even unto the very kingdom of Sweden.

Where that flood of war had a current, it carried away the true religion before it; it bare away princes out of their principalities, other governors out of their jurisdictions, ministers of God's word from their charges, owners from their possessions, and others from their places and callings; it deprived free cities of their immunities and privileges; and brought many mischiefs and inconveniences to many others.

Wherefore to preserve true religion where it was in great hazard to be suppressed; to re-establish it where it was removed; to restore princes, other governors, ministers, owners, and others to their own rights; to recover to free people their privileges; to bring home the banished; to take off the heavy yoke of bondage and intolerable burdens from their necks on whom they were unjustly laid; and finally to prevent cruel massacres and persecutions for the gospel's sake, hath this contrary stream of war been opposed; so as violence by violence, as necessity required, hath been resisted; and a strong stream of sweet water hath beaten back a great flood of salt waters.

Sec. 127. *Of the effects of the Swedish king's wars.*

The blessed events that have followed upon the king of Sweden's wars in Germany do give evident proof to the truth of the ends and intents before-mentioned. For thereby true religion is in many places re-established, and a free liberty for exercise thereof procured to the professors of it. Ancient immunities and privileges are recovered; princes, other governors, ministers of the gospel, states, polities, private lords and owners, are restored to their dominions, dignities, charges, callings, inheritances, and possessions. Many people are eased of their heavy burdens and grievances.

There hath also hereupon followed a great abatement of the greatness of the house of Austria, and such a diminution of the power thereof, as that they who have been the chief pillars of the church of Rome, are by these late victories got against them, disabled, as we hope, from helping forward

the pope's design of reducing the Christian world to an absolute obedience unto his chair, yea, and from further promoting their own ambitious desires of the monarchy of Europe.

By the fore-named success there is also procured much addition and great strength to the protestant parties, by digesting all Germany into their body; and a great means effected for facilitating the unions betwixt those that, to the great scandal of the profession, and dishonour of those worthy lights of the church, Luther and Calvin, have been distinguished by these factious titles, Lutherans and Calvinists.

Great security is hereby further brought to the reformed churches in France, who could never be reduced to the terms wherein they now are, so long as the protestant princes in Germany retained freedom and power in their own dominions.

A way is also hereby opened to the very gates of Rome, whereby the threatenings against the seven-headed beast may in the Lord's appointed time be accomplished.

Finally, there is great hope given of establishing much peace and security to all the true churches of God; and many other blessings are expected, which the Lord grant to his people!

Sec. 128. *Of praising God for the foresaid mercies.*

To make a brief recapitulation, and to gather up the sum of all, for the better application of the main point intended:—

The Lord having secured our peace, and removed from us his judgments of plague and famine;

The Lord having restored to the reformed churches in France a gracious liberty for exercising their religion;

The Lord having with more than ordinary success prospered the affairs of our nearest neighbours, the States General of the united provinces in the Netherlands;

The Lord having succoured his oppressed churches in Germany, and given to their deliverer victories beyond expectation, unto admiration;

The Lord having given very many clear evidences of his fatherly care over his churches everywhere, and of his gracious providence towards them, even now in these our days:

Should not our souls be affected with all and every of these mercies? Should they not be incensed with an ardent zeal of setting forth the honour of his name?

We, and others of the same profession, of the same religion, enjoy the comfort and benefit of the forementioned mercies, and of many other mercies flowing from the divine providence; and shall not the Lord, who so ordereth his providence for our good, have the praise and glory thereof?

Who can give sufficient thanks—nay, whose soul can be satisfied in rendering praises—to so good and gracious a God for so many and so great blessings, so seasonably and so freely conferred on his churches?

Should not all ministers of the gospel make their churches to ring again with sounding forth God's praises?

Should not publishers of books make mention of these mighty works of the Lord, to the further publishing of his name?

Should not the wits of all divine poets be set on work to indite due forms of praises, for the better magnifying of his name who hath done so glorious things for us?

Should not every Christian soul, in the best manner that it can, add something to the magnifying of God's name, as every one brought something to the building of the tabernacle?

Did we not, while the Lord was time after time shooting out against us and others his three deadly arrows of plague, famine, and sword, humble our souls before him, and call upon him instantly, continually, to spare his people, to remove his wrath, to take away his judgments?

Should we not now, the Lord having graciously heard our prayers for ourselves and others, be hearty and zealous, instant and constant, in rendering all possible praise and thanks unto him?

It hath been before declared<sup>1</sup> how true gratefulness hath especial relation to God, and ascribeth the glory of all deliverances to him, and that praise is the best gift that can be given him,<sup>2</sup> and that thereupon saints are never satisfied in setting forth God's praises.<sup>3</sup> They content not themselves with an in-

ward affection of praising God in their own souls, or secretly betwixt God and themselves, but they must needs break forth into praises of God, and manifest their inward gratitude by outward gratulation,<sup>4</sup> and that publicly, boldly, among much people, in the midst of great assemblies,<sup>5</sup> exhorting and inciting others to praise God with them,<sup>6</sup> and themselves conscientiously practising what they incite others unto.<sup>7</sup>

Now we have so great and just grounds at this time to praise God, let us take the occasions of stirring up our own and others' spirits to do it heartily and zealously, that God finding his blessings conferred on a grateful people may never repent any kindness done; but may go on to add victory to victory, success to success, blessing to blessing, till he have finished the good work done for his churches, and accomplished the promises which he hath made for destroying the kingdom of Antichrist, calling the Jews, bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, and consummating all things by his last and most glorious coming.

Wherefore, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory: I myself will awake early. My tongue shall speak of thy righteousness, and of thy praise all the day long.'

'Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord. Give unto the Lord glory and strength: give unto the Lord the glory due to his name.'

'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so: whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.' Let them that were exiled say so, whom he hath brought to the place of their habitation. Let them that were oppressed say so, whom he hath eased of their heavy burdens. Let them that are freed from the infectious plague, and from pinching famine, say so. So let them say who are restored to a free exercise of their religion. Praise ye the Lord who quietly sit on your thrones of judgment, to execute righteous justice and judgment. Praise ye the Lord that freely go to your

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 51, 79.<sup>2</sup> Sec. 87.<sup>3</sup> Sec. 108.<sup>4</sup> Sec. 86.<sup>5</sup> Sec. 116, 118.<sup>6</sup> Sec. 120.<sup>7</sup> Sec. 121.

churches to preach and hear God's word, and to observe all his holy ordinances. Praise ye the Lord that peaceably exercise your callings, possess your lands and inheritances, eat the fruit of your labours, enjoy mutual communion one with another, and partake of other benefits of the divine providence. Praise ye the Lord all ye members of the true church. Blessed be the Lord out of his church. Praise ye the Lord.

And now, good Lord, as thou hast given such occasions of praising thy name, perfect this praise by perfecting the good work which thou hast begun for thy churches. Leave not him whom thou hast raised up to be thy church's deliverer to the malicious and mischievous plots of his enemies.

Be thou his strength, his rock, his fortress, his deliverer. Uphold him with thy right hand, till he have performed all thy pleasure. Amen. Amen.

THE END.









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