

THE FIRE OF CONTENTION:

OR,

THE TROUBLE THAT FOLLOWS THE GOSPEL.

I come to send fire on the earth ; and what will I, if it be already kindled ?
LUKE XII. 49.

BEFORE I run upon division, (and yet division is the subject of my text, and for method's sake I must use some division in my discourse,) I must let you understand what this fire is that is sent, and how innocent our Saviour is that sendeth it.

1. There may be dissension betwixt the good and the good ; and hereof is the devil the author. It is the enemy that sows those tares. This is one of the abominations that the Lord abhorreth : 'A false witness that speaketh lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren,' Prov. vi. 19. God is never the immediate cause of that which he abominates. 'If any seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God,' 1 Cor. xi. 16. To clear Christ and his gospel from causing this, the tenor of all Scriptures admonisheth us with St Peter : 'Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous,' 1 Pet. iii. 8.

Unity is the badge of Christianity : we are all the members of one body. 'The eye cannot say to the hands, I have no need of you,' &c., 1 Cor. xii. We are all stones of one building, therefore must not jar one with another, lest we ruin the whole house. Christ saith, that 'a kingdom divided cannot stand.' The soldiers would not divide the unseamed coat of Christ ; far be it from us to rend his body. There are three grounds of love : virtue, pleasure, profit. Virtue all consent to be the surest and best. That then which is grounded on the best virtue is the best unity ; and this is faith. Love issuing from faith is a bond able to tie God to man, man to God ; and therefore man to man. This knot is tied so fast, that the powers of hell cannot undo it. All other unities but the communion of saints may be broken.

There is no peace so indissoluble as the peace of faith. So, contrarily, there is no contention so violent and raging as that is inflamed by erroneous

religion. Cyprian writes of Novatus,* that he would not so much as allow his own father bread while he lived, nor vouchsafe him burial being dead ; that he spurned his own wife, and killed his own child within her body. Oh, the unmatched cruelty that some men's religion (if I may so call it) hath embloodied them to ! What treasons, conspiracies, massacres, did or durst ever shew their black faces in the light of the sun like to those of Papists, all vizarded under pretended religion ! 'The Pope hath a canon, called *Nos sanctorum predecessorum*, &c.,—'We, observing the statutes of our holy predecessors, do absolve those that are bound by fidelity and oath to persons excommunicated, from their oaths ; and do forbid them to keep their fealty towards them, *quousque ipsi ad satisfactionem veniant*, till they come to yield satisfaction.' What malicious stratagems against suspended princes have not been kindled from this fire ? Against what nation hath not this cannon shot its fury ? Yea, the more to embolden subjects to such pernicious attempts, the Pope makes them believe that the very apostles take their parts. For so it is manifest by the form of Gregory's sentence, that he commandeth St Peter and St Paul, as if they were his bailiffs-errant, to execute the writs of his pontifical and privative authority.

Malice in humour is like fire in straw, quickly up and quickly out ; but taking hold of conscience, like fire in steel : *quod tarde acquisivit, diu retinet*,—what was long in getting will be longer in keeping. Religion is the greatest enemy to religion ; the false to the true. *Favos etiam vespæ faciunt*.† Wasps also make combs, though instead of honey we find gunpowder. Of dissension among professors of the gospel, Christ is not author ; he never gave fire to burn his church. Yet he hath his hand in it. 'There must be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest,' 1 Cor. xi. 19. He draws good out of evil, and makes a good *shall* of the evil *must* ; so raising a virtue from a necessity. From contentions begot by Satan, he so sweetly works that the profession of his children, but darkly glowing before, shall be made to shine brightly. In Queen Mary's time, when persecution wrung the church, martyrdom gave a manifest approbation of many unknown saints. The virtues of divers had been less noted if this fiery trial had not put them to it. God's glory and power are more perspicuous in strengthening his against their enemies than if they had none. Christ came not to send this fire, yet he wisely tempers it to our good.

2. There may be dissension betwixt the wicked and the wicked ; and hereof also is Satan author. He sets his own together by the ears, like cocks of the game, to make him sport. Hereupon he raised these great heathen wars, that in them millions of souls might go down to people his lower kingdom. Hereupon he draws ruffian into the field against ruffian, and then laughs at their vainly spilt blood. All the contentions, quarrels, whereby one evil neighbour vexeth another, all slanders, scoldings, reproaches, calumnies, are his own damned fires. Thus sometimes the ungodly massacre the ungodly, oppressors devour oppressors. 'I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians : and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour ; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom,' Isa. xix. 2. The Pharisees against the Sadducees, the Turk against the Pope, the transgressor against transgressor. Covetousness shall be against prodigality, baseness against pride, temerity against dastardy. The drunkard spills the drunkard, the thief robs the thief,—*proditoris proditor*,—the traitor shall be betrayed, and the cozener shall be cheated. 'They shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm ; Manasseh, Ephraim ; and Ephraim,

* Lib. ii, ep. 8.

† Tertul.

Manasseh,' Isa. ix. 21. It is impossible that any true peace should be amongst the wicked, whilst they want the solder that should glue them together—faith. Agreement in evil is not peace, but conspiracy. Wicked men's combining themselves may be a faction, no unity, no amity; so they have but *metum et noxam conscientie pro fœdere*,—terror and guilt of conscience for their league. But some may question, Doth not Satan, in setting reprobates against reprobates, overthrow his own kingdom? I answer—

(1.) The devil is politic, and will not divide his subjects, when by their holding together he may divide the church. So the Pharisees, though they hate the Sadducees, and the Herodians, that despise them both, shall all join forces, shake and take hands against Christ, Matt. xxii. 16, 23. Papists are enemies to truth, schismatics to peace; yet both to the church: which suffers, as her Saviour did, *in medio inimicorum*, in the midst of adversaries, not only to her now, but at other times also to themselves. Herod and Pilate were of reconciled* enemies reconciled friends, that their united rancours might meet against Jesus. The Jews and the Lystrians, so diversely religioned, the devil can make agree to stone Paul, Acts xiv. 19. Thus Satan holds them under colours and pay, whilst they can do him any service; but when they can no longer vex others, he falls to vexing of them; and enrageth their thirst to one another's blood, when they have done quaffing the blood of the saints.

(2.) The devil, in raising seditions and tumults among his own, intends not the destruction but erection of his kingdom. Perhaps his forces on earth are weakened, but his territories in hell are replenished; wherein he takes himself to reign most surely. For Satan, during a man's life, knows not certainly whether he belongs to God or to him. Predestination is too mystical and secret a book for his condemned eyes to look into; and repentance hath often stepped in between old age and death, frustrating the hopes of Satan. Therefore he hastens a wicked man, with what speed he can, to hell; for till he come within the smoky gates, Satan is not sure of him; he may start out of his clutches. For this cause he precipitates witches with much suddenness to their ends: whom, one would think, he should let live, that they might do more mischief. No; such is his malicious policy, he would be sure of some, and rather take one soul in present, than hazard all on the vain hope of more gains.

3. There is a dissension between the wicked and godly; nor yet is Christ the proper and immediate cause of this. For 'if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men,' Rom. xii. 18.

4. There is an enmity betwixt grace and wickedness, a continual combat between sanctity and sin; and this is the fire Christ came to send. He is to some a living stone, whereupon they are built to life; to others a stone of offence, whereat they stumble to death. Now, because the local seat of holiness on earth is in the hearts of the saints, of wickedness in the devil and his instruments, therefore it follows that the evil will persecute the good, and the good may not partake of the vices of the bad. 'What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,' 2 Cor. vi. 16. Out of the Egypt of this world hath God called his sons. We are forbidden all 'fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness;' not altogether with the workers, 'for then we must needs go out of the world,' 1 Cor. v. 10. It is commanded, Jer. xv. 19, that 'the precious be separated from the vile;' yet so that they may return to the

* *Qu.* 'unreconciled?'—*Ed.*

good, though the good may not turn to them. It is good for the good to sunder themselves from the incorrigible wicked, as being the first stair of the ladder that leaves the earth, and sets the first step of our journey to heaven. God in his eternal decree separated the elect from the reprobate; in his vocation he sequesters them from corrupt nature and sin. When he executes particular judgment, he takes Israel from the tabernacles of Korah; when he will give the general, he will sever the sheep from the goats.

Christ, then, who is the 'Prince of peace,' Isa. ix. 6, causeth not quarrels between man and man, as they are creatures; but betwixt goodness and evil, as they are contrary natures. That the sons of Belial hate the sons of God, Christ is not the cause, but the occasion. For when the gospel separates us from the world, the world then bends his malicious forces against us; so that peace in sin, ver. 51, Christ came not to send, but peace of conscience: Phil. iv. 7, 'The peace of God, which passeth all understanding,' &c. Which because the wicked will not embrace, therefore 'five in one house shall be divided: the father against the son, and the son against the father,' &c., ver. 52, 53. The gospel doth not otherwise work this division than the law is said to make sin, Rom. vii. 7, because it made sin known; or the sun is said to cause moles, because it causeth their appearance. Let Paul continue a Pharisee, and the Pharisees will love him; convert he to a Christian, and they will hate him. Whiles we live after the world, we have peace with the world, none with God; when we are turned to Christ, we have peace with God, none with the world.

This ground laid, we will consider, for the better exposition of the words, five circumstances:—1. The *fire*; 2. The *fuel*; 3. The *kindlers*; 4. The *smoke*; 5. The *bellows*.

Wherein we shall find Christ's *willing*, and the *fire's kindling*: who wills goodness to his chosen, which he is sure will enrage the wicked to their persecution. The cause thus given, the fire is left to be kindled by others. For though *non sine Deo patimur*, yet *non à Deo petimur*. The instruments of our affliction will be found ungodly, who, though they plead, We have done the will of the Lord, shall go to hell for their labour.

1. The *fire* is discord, debate, contention, anger, and hatred against the godly. Every man is composed of four elemental humours, whereof one is choler, resembled to fire. In whom this choler is most adust and puissant, they are usually most hot, furious, fiery. But I speak here of nature; for grace can alter nature, and purge this corruption. Regeneration is the best physic to purge choler. Many medicines hath philosophy prescribed against this spiritual disease, but in vain. The philosopher's servant could scoff his master: He inveighs against anger, writes volumes against it, *et ipse mihi irascitur*,—and yet he is angry with me. Only grace can, more than give rules, give power to master this madness. Fire and contention have some resemblances:—

(1.) Debate is like fire; for as that of all elements, so this of all passions, is most violent. The earth is huge, yet we walk quietly on it; it suffers our ploughs to rend up the entrails of it, to teach us patience. The air is copious, yet admits our respiration. The waters boisterous, yet sail we upon them, against them. But fire, especially getting the upper hand, is unmercifully raging: it left nothing behind to witness the former happiness of Sodom. The world's last destruction shall be by fire, 2 Pet. iii. 12; and God useth that, of all elements, to express the very torments of hell, adding brimstone to it, Rev. xxi. 8. To this is the anger of God likened: 'Our God is even a consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29. So doth debate exceed all

passions : floods of correction cannot quench the turbulent spirit, which is 'set on fire of hell,' James iii. 6. Only one extreme may drive out another, as we hold our burnt finger to the fire, by a new heat to extract the former. So the fire of grace only must draw out the fire of debate, Matt. iii. 11, or send it to the everlasting fire to quench it, ver. 12.

(2.) Contention is like fire, for both burn so long as there is any exustible matter to contend with. Only herein it transcends fire : for fire begets not matter, but consumes it ; debate begets matter, but not consumes it. For the wicked study causes of contention, as Benhadad did against Ahab, 1 Kings xx. So when the Pope could find no just exception against Frederick the emperor, he quarrelled with him for holding the wrong stirrup when the great prelate should mount his palfrey ; and though he might easily mistake, for emperors are not used to hold stirrups, yet he was persecuted almost to excommunication for it. It is woeful dwelling amongst debateful men, whose souls hate peace ; that are ἀσπίγγοι, 'without natural affection,' Rom. i. 13,—which Paul makes a reprobate's mark,—striking all that stand in their way, and not ceasing to burn till all matter cease to feed them. Solomon describes such with a fiery comparison, Prov. xxvi. First, ver. 17, he calls him a busy-body : 'He passeth by, and meddleth with strife not belonging to him ;' he thrusts himself into impertinent business, and 'is like one that taketh a dog by the ears,' which he can neither hold nor well let go. Ver. 18, he notes his politic villany : 'As a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, and saith, Am I not in sport ?' he scattereth abroad mortal mischiefs under the colour of jests. And, ver. 20, lest the fire should go out, he administers fuel himself : 'Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out.' Ver. 21, when he hath kindled this flame, he strives to spread and disperse it, and is as 'coals to burning coals, and wood to the fire. The words of a tale-bearer are wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.' They penetrate and cruciate the most tender and sensible places.

(3.) As a little spark grows to a great flame, so a small debate often proves a great rent. 'Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth !' James iii. 5. The wind, at first a small vapour, yet gets such strength in going, that it overturns trees and towers. 'A backbiting tongue hath pulled down strong cities, and overthrown the houses of great men,' Eccles. xxviii. 14. War is compared to fire : Num. xxi. 28, 'A fire hath gone out of Heshbon, and a flame from the city of Sihon : it hath consumed Ar of Moab, and the lords of the high places of Arnon.' But contention runs like wild-fire ; so furious a pace, that nothing but blood can extinguish it.

(4.) As fire is proverbially said to be an ill master, but a good servant : so anger, where it is a lord of rule, is a lord of misrule ; but where it is subdued to reason, or rather sanctified by grace, it is a good servant. That anger is holy that is zealous for the glory of God.

Thus is division a raging fire, and able, whether it take hold of civility or religion, of bourse or church, to overthrow the common good of both.

For civility, the breaking of relatives is the ruin of substantives. We stand not of ourselves, but upon reference. Want of justice in magistrates, of instruction in governors, of obedience in subjects, of charity in neighbours, destroys the commonwealth. Some gather thus much from the fifth commandment, by good consequence : 'Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' For if princes rule well, and subjects obey well ; if masters command right, and servants do right ; if parents instruct children in the fear of God, and

children obey parents in that fear, this happy harmony shall preserve the land. If this relation and reciprocal duty be neglected, all runs to ruin, and the blessing of long life shall be withdrawn. For it is not fit they should have long life that rebel against those from whom they had, and by whom they hold, their life.

Begin with the least ascendantly. The overthrow of a house is division. When the husband and wife draw not evenly in the yoke,—when the one brings fire, and the other hath no water to quench it,—when the children are refractory, the servants wasters, there must needs be a decay of this family. Whereof consists a city but of many households? If the particulars be ruined, what will become of the general? When the members are gone, where is the body? If the magistrates are unjust, the people disobedient; if one profession quarrel with another, and deny mutuality,—the head refusing to give guidance, the eyes their sight, the feet to walk, the hands to work,—the body of that city dissolves. The dissolution of cities and towns must needs ruin the kingdom. When the members fell out with the stomach, that it devoured all and took no pains, hereon the eye would not see for it, nor the hand work for it, nor the foot walk for it, &c.; so the stomach wanting meat, the eyes, hands, feet, and all members, faint and languish. Tributes and subsidies are but the dues and duties of the members to the prince; who, as the stomach, returns all to their welfare and benefit.

Dissension in religion doth no less hurt, doth more. It divides a house: here, ver. 52, ‘Five in one house shall be divided: two against three, and three against two.’ And, Matt. x. 36, ‘A man’s foes shall be they of his own household.’ It divides a city: how many cities have been destroyed by their own mutinous distractions, whom foreign invasions could not subdue! It divides a kingdom: whereof France hath long been a bleeding witness; neither hath England been insensible.

‘Ac velut in magno populo, cum saepe coorta est
Seditio, sævitque animis ignobile vulgus:
Jamque faces et saxa volant, furor arma ministrat.’ *

It overthrows propinquity: the mutual succour of lending, borrowing, giving, relieving, is lost. Yea, it overturns nature itself, setting ‘children at variance against their own parents,’ Matt. x. 35. There are three very near: superior, equal, inferior—parent, wife, children; yet we must separate from them, rather than from Jesus Christ, ver. 37. Yea, it is enough to extirpate all: *regem, legem, gregem*,—prince, law, and people. No wonder, then, if the busy devil seeks so studiously to kindle this fire. So Eusebius observes:† The subtle serpent, when persecutions gave the church breathing space, began to vex her with her own divisions.

2. The *fuel* whereon this fire works is the good profession of the godly. So the rulers against Daniel, *in causa Dei sui*, chap. vi. 4,—because of his religion. Ps. lix. 3, ‘The mighty are gathered against me, not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord.’ They persecute us, not because they find evil in us, but because they cannot find evil in us. ‘They run and prepare themselves against me, without my fault.’ Without fault? It is fault enough in their judgment because we serve the Lord. ‘They speak evil of us, because we run not with them to the same excess of riot,’ 1 Pet. iv. 4. If we will not communicate with their vicious customs, we shall suffer under their raging cruelties. Against Israel, yea, because it is Israel, do they consult: ‘Come, let us cut off them from being a nation; that the name of Israel

* Virgil; Æn. i.

† Eccles. Hist.

may be no more in remembrance,' Ps. lxxxiii. 4. For this cause was the Babylonian fire kindled against those three servants of God; and the same cause moved mystical Babylon to burn our martyrs in England. If they would have turned to idols and images, the fire had been put out. We would not, could not, yield to their superstitions, therefore the fire burned.

But that which is the occasion of evil cannot be perfectly good. Indeed that which simply and of itself causeth evil is evil itself. But that may be good which indirectly and by consequence, in man's corrupt nature, occasioneth it. The gospel, and integrity of professing it, is not the efficient, but accidental cause, or rather properly no cause, but an occasion of this feud. The bright sun shining on mud and filth is said to cause stench; yet is not the sun the true cause, but the former putrefaction of the subject reflected on. When a corrupt vapour comes into the fiery region, it is soon inflamed. Their rancorous filth had lain quiet, as muck in a dunghill, had not the sun of the gospel shone on it and stirred it. Now howsoever the gospel is not the direct cause of this, yet surely the occasion. For Athens is quiet enough till Paul comes; and till Christ is born, Jerusalem is hushed in peace. Many parishes stick not to say, We had rest and security enough before; but now since preaching came in, and the pulpits have been warmed, there is nothing but disturbance and unquietness. How else could this text be true, that Christ 'came to send fire on the earth?' The deluge of sin was universal, and the waters of iniquity stood untroubled, and all was a *mare mortuum*; but when Christ puts fire to this water, no marvel if they wrestle. The devil stirs not till God rouse him, as the wild boar sleeps till he be hunted. Let darkness cover men's impieties, and their slumber is unmolested; produce them to the light, and they cannot endure it. The ulcerous side full of dead flesh feels not till you touch the quick. But let Elias tell Ahab of his idolatries, John Baptist, Herod of his lusts, and then, 'Thou art mine enemy.' The ungodly may pretend other causes, but this is the true one. The Pope refused to confirm an archbishop elect, when no insufficiency could be found against him, only because of his age;* not considering that himself, being older, did manage a greater place. But if the archbishop was able to travel to Rome and back again to England, sure he was able to have sat in the chair of Canterbury. Age was the exception; but the truth was, the archbishop's honesty; that he carried not with him to Rome a golden bottle to quench the Pope's thirsty soul, as many others did, who returned home with as much wit as they went forth, but not with so much money. Such was the Pope's pretence against Reimundus, the good Earl of Toulouse, that he was a heretic; but when his just purgation and justifying of himself would not pacify his unmerciful Holiness, nor get peaceable possession of his own lands, it was evident to all eyes that the Pope's desire was not so much to have the earl part from his heresy, as from his heritage.† Persecutors plead castigation of errors, but they mean subversion of truth.

But great peace is prophesied to the gospel: Isa. xi. 6, 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie quietly by the kid,' &c.; and, Micah iv. 3, 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.' I answer, God will either restrain the fury of these savage beasts, and turn Esau's threats into mildness when he meets Jacob: 'He that sits in heaven laughs' at their combinings, Ps. ii. 4. Or many tyrants shall be converted to the faith of Christ, subjecting their crowns and laying down their sceptres at the feet of the Lamb. Or it

* Matth. Paris.

† Act. and Mon.

may intend that outward universal peace which was through all the world when Christ was born, in the days of Augustus. But most specially that peace of conscience and communion which shall be among the saints, who shall lay aside all querelous differences, and be made one by the blood of Jesus.

But when the gospel came to us in Queen Elizabeth's days, of so blessed memory, we also had much peace. We had with *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, sung also *Pax in terris*. The iron gates of war were shut up, and the long tossed ark of our church had an olive-branch of flourishing peace bestowed upon it. The fury of an adversary was not known, but 'righteousness and peace kissed each other.' Yet was not this peace without great fires :—

(1.) There was a great fire of Anabaptism: a gross, perverse, and sottish sect, that had washed off their font-water as unclean, and thought it not enough to run out of Babylon, unless they ran also out of themselves, out of their wits. This combustion could not be well quenched; only we were happily rid of it by the shifting ground. For when the flames were suppressed in England, they burst out beyond sea.

(2.) There was a great fire of Brownism: an *ignis fatuus*, fastening on abundance of crude and squalid matter, that could not easily be extinguished. It was blown up with the bellows of pride; and because it might not have its own swing, it fell to direct railing. They say the church of England may be their mother, but is none of God's wife. Why do they not call her plain 'whore?' for such is a mother that hath children, and no husband. But these the whiles are brave sons, who care not to prove themselves bastards, that their mother may be noted for a harlot. But the shame be their own, integrity hers; who hath not defiled her bed, though they have shamed her womb. But whiles they call her St John's beast in the Revelation, let them beware lest they prove themselves such as St Paul calls beasts, even dogs, Phil. iii. 2. Surely God will never leave peaceable spirits in England, to go dwell with railers at Amsterdam.

(3.) There was a raging fire of the Papists; who to maintain their spiritual fire of superstition, made use of material fire to set a whole land in combustion. How unspeakable were their treasons against that gracious princess! which yet if we gather up into one volume, we shall find their last equalling all: which should have been a fire, a fire indeed, such a one as hell itself could only belch out. But bless we our God, that with sweet showers of mercy rained it out.

These fires have been kindled in a land of peace, though many tears have been showered upon them, and earnest prayers sent up to heaven for their quenching. Yea, and will be still, so long as that crown-shorn generation can transport their burning quills into England; and their great Antichrist, the successor not of Peter, but of Romulus, sits on that fiery chair. So long as he is suffered to tyrannise over nations, to depose kings, and dispose kingdoms; who prays Peter and Paul (as if they never had taught subjects to obey their sovereigns) to eradicate and cast out an emperor from his royalty.* Whereupon he conferred the empire upon Rodolphus, with this blasphemous verse :—

'Petra dedit Petro, Petrus diadema Rodolpho;'

'All kingdoms were to Peter given by Christ;
And Peter may dispose them as he list.'

But as Cardinal Benno affirms, that when this Hildebrand would needs so-

* Pope Hildebrand in his second excommunication of Henry Emp.

lemly excommunicate the emperor, his chair burst in pieces, being but newly made of sufficient timber ; so if it were thoroughly broken to fitters,* never, like Jericho, to be rebuilt, then, and not till then, princes may reign in peace. From all this we may observe—

First, That this fire was kindled in Christ's time, and hath burned ever since. For if this rage stroke at the head, it will not favour the members. If the saucy devil durst meddle and encounter with the captain, he will not fear to set upon a mean soldier. 'Remember,' saith Christ, 'the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than the lord ; if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you,' John xv. 20. We cannot expect that immunity which our Saviour never found. In the securest and most quiet state of the church we have found this : that sedition hath trode on the heels of peace, and persecution been born into the world with the feet forward, for haste.

Secondly, That the godly must maintain this fire ; for there must be in them no deficiency of fuel. They must hold fast integrity, though this be the matter whereupon this fire works. No peace must be had with them that have no peace with God ; I deny not peace in civil affairs, but in conforming our manners to theirs. For righteousness must not yield to iniquity ; Christ must be born, and being born must reign, though Herod rage, and the devil foam, and all Jerusalem be troubled at it, Matt. ii. 3. Dagon must yield to the ark, not the ark to Dagon, 1 Sam. v. 3 ; the ten tribes come to Judah, not Judah go to them ; Ishbosheth to David, not David to Ishbosheth.

The gospel must be preached, though hell break out into opposition ; and we must keep faith and a good conscience, though persecutors print in our sides 'the marks of the Lord Jesus.'

Thirdly, That the fruit of the gospel is so far from allowing carnal peace, that it gives dissension. It hath ever been the destiny of the gospel to bring commotion, trouble, and wars ; though no doctrine teacheth so much peace. Matt. x. 34, 'I came not to send peace, but a sword.' Not that the gospel of itself causeth wars ; for it maketh peace between God and man, man and man, man and his inward soul ; but it overturneth the tables of the money-changers, spoileth the bank of usurers, will not let Herod keep his Herodias, bars Demetrius of his idolatrous shrines, pulls the cup from the mouth of the drunkard, denounceth confusion to the oppressor, unvizardeth painted hypocrisy, and discovers the ugly face of fraud to the world : therefore it hath enemies, even to the effusion of blood, and endeavoured extirpation of all that profess it. So that partly this proceeds from our own corruption, that cannot endure the light, because our deeds are evil ; and partly from the malice of Satan, who by the growth of the gospel loseth his jurisdiction. For look, how much ground Christianity gets, that bloody infernal Turk loseth. So that neither can the devil so uncontrollably lead men to quiet damnation ; neither can the evil heart be so securely evil. For the gospel informs the understanding, the understanding tells the conscience, and the conscience will not spare to tell men their wickedness. Though God's hand forbears to strike outwardly, the conscience smites inwardly ; and the former unjust peace is broken by a new just war. Men shall by this means know hell before they salute it, and discern themselves in that broad way that leads to damnation. Safe they may be, they cannot be secure. Thus the gospel begets all manner of enemies, foreign, civil, domestical. Foreign : the devil, who now makes apparent his horns, as if it were high time to bestir himself.

* That is, splinters.—Ed.

He sees he cannot lead souls to his black kingdom in a twine thread, as he was wont, without reluctancy ; he must clap irons upon them, and bind them with his strongest tentations. Civil : the world, which erst ticed us on, as a bait doth the fish, not knowing that there is a hook so near the jaws ; we took it for a kind and familiar friend, but now it is descried and described for a very adversary. Domestical : thy own bosom is disquieted, and thou must muster up all the forces of thy soul, to take the traitor that lurks within thee, thy own flesh. This is a near and a dear enemy, yet we must fight against it, and that with a will to subdue it ; denying ourselves, and forsaking our delighted lusts and pleasures. The godly must be fain to sit, like the nightingale, with a thorn against her breast. If they scape conflicts abroad, they are sure to have them at home ; and if foreign and professed adversaries should give over their invasions, yet this domestical rebel, lust, must with great trouble be subdued. After which spiritual combat, our comfort is that in the end the victory shall be ours. 'It shall not have rule over them that fear God, neither shall they be burnt with the flames thereof,' Ecclus. xxviii. 22. Hence we learn five useful lessons :—

Lesson 1.—That we have need of patience, seeing we know that the law of our profession binds us to a warfare ; and it is decreed upon that 'all that will live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution.' When fire, which was the god of the Chaldeans, had devoured all the other wooden deities, Canopis set upon him a caldron full of water, whose bottom was full of holes artificially stopped with wax ; which, when it felt the heat of that furious idol, melted and gave way to the water to fall down upon it, and quench it. The water of our patience must only extinguish this fire ; nothing but our tears, moderation, and sufferance can abate it. But this patience hath no further latitude than our proper respect ; for in the cause of the Lord we must be jealous and zealous. *Meam injuriam patienter tuli, injuriam contra sponsam Christi ferre non potui,**—Our own injuries we must bury in forgetfulness, but wrongs to the truth of God, and gospel of Jesus Christ, we must oppose. Patience is intolerable when the honour of God is in question. Otherwise we must consider, that by troubles God doth try and exercise our patience. *Ideo Deus misit in terram bonam separationem, ut malam rumperet conjunctionem,*—Therefore God sent on earth a good separation, that he might dissolve an evil conjunction.

Lesson 2.—That we must not shrink from our profession, though we know it to be the fuel that maintains this fire. Daniel leaves not his God, though he be shewed the lions ; nor those three servants their integrity and abomination of the idol, though the heat of the fire be septupled. Let the Pope spew out his execrations, interdictions, and maledictions,—for his holy mouth is full of curses,—yet keep we our faith : it is better to have the Pope curse us than God. His curse is but like Domitian's thunder : if you give ear to the cracks and noise, it seems a terrible and hideous matter ; but if you consider the causes and effects, it is a ridiculous jest. Revolt not from the gospel, from thy faith and innocency ; and though he curse, the Lord will bless. Balaam could say, *Quomodo maledicam ei, cui non maledixit Dominus?*—How shall I curse him whom the Lord hath not cursed ? Rash and headlong judgment hurts not the person *de quo temere judicatur*, against whom it is denounced, but him that so indiscreetly judgeth. *Qui conantur per iram aliena coercere, graviora committunt,*—To correct other men's errors in anger is to commit a greater error than theirs. Let not the thunders of malignant opposers dishearten thy zeal. 'The just shall live by

* Jerom. ad Vigil.

faith : but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him,' Heb. x. 38.

Lesson 3.—That we think not much of the troublous fires that are thus sent to wait upon the gospel. He that gave us that blessed covenant meant not that we should stick at these conditions. It is enough to have this pass-over, though we eat it with sour herbs; to enjoy the lily, though 'among thorns.' Let the Jews fret, and devils run mad, and many give ground to these persecutions; yet say we with Peter, 'Master, whither shall we go from thee? thou hast the words of eternal life,' John vi. 68. He is unworthy of God's favour that cannot go away contented with it, unless he may also enjoy the favour of the world. It is enough to have the promise of a crown, although we climb to it by the cross. The ancient Christians used to have *crucem coronatam* pictured, a cross with a crown on the top of it. *Tolle crucem, si vis et habere coronam.* Their hieroglyphic taught men to attain the crown by bearing the cross. Though the friends and factors of hell compass us round, yet we have heaven within us; would we have it within us and without us too? That is only the privilege of glory. Cannot Paul endure the 'thorns and buffets of Satan?' 2 Cor. xii. 9. Let him quiet his heart with God's encouragement: 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' It is enough to have the 'peace of God, which passeth all understanding,' Phil. iv. 7, though we lack the ill-conditioned peace of the world. Murmur not that the world denies her wanton solaces to tickle thee with vain pleasures; thou hast the 'joy of the Holy Ghost:' God is thy portion. Though the lot fall short in earthly means, wealth and worship, yet he is well for a part that hath God for his portion. Content thyself; this fire must go with the gospel, and thou art unworthy of the immortal gold of grace if thou wilt not endure it to be tried in the fire. 'Your faith is much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire: and shall be found at last to praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ,' 1 Pet. i. 7.

Lesson 4.—That we esteem not the worse of our profession, but the better. It is no small comfort that God thinks thee worthy to suffer for his name. This was the apostles' joy, not that they were worthy, but 'that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ,' Acts v. 41. He refused not to be our Saviour for the shame he was put to; he brooked a purple robe to cover his white innocency; his face, which is worshipped by the angels in heaven, to be spit on; his soul, in the midst of all his unutterable pangs, to be derided and jested at; some wagging their heads, others moving their tongues to blasphemy; and if the manner of death could add to his ignominy, he suffered the most opprobrious: yet, saith Paul, for our sakes, 'he endured the cross, and despised the shame,' Heb. xii. 2;—this, all this shame, that he might bring salvation to us, and us to salvation. And shall we be ashamed of his profession, that was not ashamed of our protection? If we be, we have read his judgment: 'He will be ashamed of us before his Father in heaven.' The king doth not cast away his crown, though it be the occasion of many treasons. Lose not thy hope and hold of a royal inheritance, because this title hath many enemies. He was never worthy to wear a wreath of victory, that, coward-like, ran out of the bloody field. The unthrifty soul is justly starved, that will not reap and gather his corn because there be thistles amongst it. He never knew how precious a metal gold is, that will rather throw away his ore than take pains at the furnace. It is pity that ever the water of baptism was spilt upon his face that forsakes the standard of Christ because he hath many enemies. Israel had never gotten that promised Canaan had they been afraid of the sons of Anak.

It is honour enough to be a Christian, though others that are contemptible do cast contempt upon it. Our Saviour hath armed us with a sweet prediction: 'These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world,' John xvi. 33.

Lesson 5.—Seeing the fuel is our integrity,—and this they specially strike at,—let us more constantly hold together: confirming the communion of saints, which they would dissolve. Let us more strongly fortify our unity, because they so fiercely assault it; and cling faithfully to our Head, from whom their sacrilegious hands would pull us. 'Lord, whither shall we go from thee? thou hast the words of eternal life,' John vi. 68. Where those words are found, woe be to us if we are not found! *Multitudo inimicorum corroboret unitatem amicorum.* Let not brethren fight with themselves whiles they have foreign enemies. It is enough that foes strike us; let not us strike our friends. No, nor yet part with our friends and Christ's, because some adversaries are scattered among them. What though the miscellaneous rabble of the profane, as the Brownists term them, be admitted among us; shall the lewdness of these disannul God's covenant with his? Yes, say they: this is their mercy; God's is more. He still held Israel for his, when not many in Israel held him for theirs. The desert was a witness of their mutinous rebellion against God and his minister; yet the pillar of protection by day and night left them not. Moses was so far from rejecting them, that he would not endure that God should reject them, though for his own advantage. In all companies there will be evil intruders: Satan among the angels, Saul among the prophets, Judas among the apostles, Nicolas * among the deacons, Demas among professors. Yet though Thyatira retains a Jezebel, the good are commanded but 'to hold their own,' Rev. ii. 25.

But say they, we reserve the ceremonies of a superstitious church. But we reserve no superstition in those ceremonies. We have both abridged their number and altered their nature. As it was a pains not amiss undertaken of late, to reduce the feast of Christ's nativity as near to the right *quando* and period of time as art and industry could devise, by taking up the loose minutes which, in tract of time and multiplication of degrees, had drawn out a wider distance by certain days than was congruent to the first calendar; so hath our church, so near as she could, abridged the rank superfluities and excrescent corruptions which the traditional ceremonies and ceremonial traditions of Rome had brought in, and thereby removed her from that nearness to her Saviour which she formerly enjoyed, striving to reduce herself concerning ceremonies; for their number to paucity, for their nature to purity, for their use to significancy.

Separate we not then from the church, because the church cannot separate from all imperfection; but keep the Apostle's rule: Eph. iv. 15, 'Follow the truth in love;' not only the truth, but the truth in love. Divers follow the truth, but not truly:—

(1.) Some there are that embrace the truth, but not all the truth: those are heretics.

(2.) Some embrace the truth, but not in unity: and those are separatists.

(3.) Others embrace the truth in unity and verity, but not in heart: and those are hypocrites.

Therefore the Apostle so often urgeth it: 'Be ye all of one mind: have the same affection.' As children of one house have most usually one and

* Supposing that Nicolas (Acts vi. 5) was the founder of the sect of the Nicolaitanes, (Rev. ii.) which is, however, by no means certain.—Ed.

the same education, so all God's children must be like affected to God, to Christ, to the church, and one to another. To God in obedience and piety, to Christ in faith and sincerity, to the church in peace and unity, to their own sins in hatred and enmity, to one another in love and charity: employing the graces of God bestowed on us to the edification and consolation of others; spending ourselves, like torches, to give others light. A Christian, though he be the fittest man of all, yet he is servant to all: to Christ for himself, to others for Christ. 'Serve one another in love,' Gal. v. 13. Let this affection of unity be increased by considering three inconveniences of dissension:—

(1.) A great advantage is given to the enemy. They boast the goodness of their errors, whilst we agree not in our truth. They take opportunity to shuffle in their counterfeit coin, whilst we consent not in our gold; I say not so much for the weight or pureness of the substance, as for the fashion. Is it not a shame for the children of God to dissent, when the children of hell are at peace? It is a military principle: tempt not an enemy by giving him the advantage. What is this but to hearten their malignant opposition to assault us, when they spy in the city a breach? *Qui unionem rumpit*,—He that dissolves the union of parts, overthrows the unity of the whole.

(2.) Sin by this means steals up: nor is there an advantage given only to our adversaries of Rome, but to our enemies of hell. Wickedness is a crafty thief, which spying a town on fire, and all hands labouring to quench it, takes his advantage of booties, and what others redeem he steals. Whiles we are busy about this fire, the devil's factors come abroad, like Nicholas's clerks, and steal away souls. Whiles so many disagree about Christ's descending into hell, Satan gathers many thither.

(3.) Our souls by this means oftentimes become rusty, and gather corruption, for want of scouring them by repentance. Whiles we are careful and curious about mint and cummin, justice and piety go away neglected. We at once grow hot in contention and cold in devotion. The fire of the altar goes out whilst the fire of sedition is fuelled. The means whereby the shepherds take the pelican is to lay fire near her nest; which she, in a foolish pity to save her young ones, offers to flap out with her wings, and so is burned herself. So many, in a fond compassion to quench this fire, burn their own wings, rather than help others. If our ashes could quench it, we should not grudge them; but since it increaseth part-takings, let us either quench it with our tears, or by prayers move God to put it out. Howsoever, neglect we not the estate of our own souls, nor suffer our hearts overgrown with the rust of corruption or moss of security. So thou mayest be like the gold-finer, that is all day purifying of metals, till himself be reezed, smoothed,* and soiled all over. Take heed; thou mayest be so long about the fire, till thou be made black with the smoke.

3. We have brought together the fire and the fuel; now we must look for kindlers. The *kindler* of this fire is principally Satan: it is he that brings the fuel of good men's sanctity and the fire of evil men's iniquity together, and so begets a great flame. This he doth perform either by his instruments or by himself. He is the great bnstuary himself, and hath other deputed inflamers under him.

Sometimes immediately by himself, Rev. xii. That 'great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns on his heads,' stands 'before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child so

* *Qu.* 'smuttet,' or 'smoked'?—Ed.

soon as it was born.' When he perceived that the Great Light (Christ) was come into the world, by throwing down his oracles of darkness, he begins to bustle, and howsoever he speeds, he will fight two or three bouts with him, in a monomachy or duel, person to person. He durst not trust this battle to an instrument, or fight by attorney: this fire he will kindle himself. *Per alium desperat; quod etiam per se fieri dubitat.* As proud as he is, rather than he will hazard the escaping of a soul from his black kingdom, he will in his own proper person take the pains to hamper him with his strongest temptations.

Sometimes by his instruments, which are many thousands: for if we compare numbers, he hath more helpers on earth to kindle this fire, than Christ hath servants to put it out. Therefore he is called 'the god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4; where *sub nomine mundi* are meant *mundani*, worldlings: Rev. xii. 9, he is said to 'deceive the whole world.' He labours to deceive all that are *in* the world, but he doth deceive all that are *of* the world. It was he that stirred up covetousness in the Sabeans, and covetousness stirred up their hearts against Job. He incensed Haman, and Haman Ahasuerus against the Jews. He provoked Judas, and almost all Judah, against Jesus. He kindleth malice in their hearts, that kindleth these damnable fires, and shall burn in unquenchable fire for his labour. It is he that provoketh the magistrate to tyranny, the people to disobedience and treachery, the learned to heresy, the simple to security, all to rebellion and impiety. Men little think whose instruments they are, and whose business they go about, when they put their finger in this fire. It is the devil that puts slander in their tongues, malice in their hearts, and mischief in their hands: whereby they labour either *seducere* or *abducere*,* to corrupt men's souls or to cut their throats. For Satan's whole intent is to draw men *à cultu Dei debito, ad cultum suimet indebitum*,—from worshipping the God of light, to worship him that is an angel of darkness. Oh that men would consider what eternal fire is prepared for them, by whom this mystical fire is kindled!

Now Satan kindleth two sorts of fires, general or special. And either of these is double. The general are extended either to error or terror.

(1.) He kindles the fire of open war. He is the great general of that army, Ps. ii., that do 'band themselves against the Lord's anointed.' 'The dragon and his angels fight against Michael and his angels,' Rev. xii. There is no fighting against the saints but under his colours. He was the captain in that Parisian massacre; the pilot to that invincible navy in '88. He is the great master of the Inquisition: the grand Cair† of all confederacies abroad; the Machiavel of all conspiracies at home. There was no treason but was first hammered in his forge, and took the damned fire from his breath. The Pope hath been his applauded instrument many years, to kindle these belluine and Belial fires. Innumerable seditions of wars have been sent from the ingenious study of his holy breast to vex Christian emperors and kings: wherein continually the Pope gave the battle, but the Lord gave the victory, and that where his vicar least intended it. Hildebrand (Hell-brand rather) promised Rodolphus, whom he incensed against his liege-emperor Henricus, assured conquest; but it seems the bishop had small power in heaven, whatsoever he pretended on earth, for Rodolphus's overthrow gave Henricus direct proof to the contrary. It appears in a cer-

* Rupert.

† I know not what is the allusion here, unless it be to Carr, Earl of Somerset, who, after having long enjoyed undeserved favour, was, in his fall, charged with all crimes.—ED.

tain letter of Benno to the cardinals, that this Hildebrand, preaching in the pulpit, did so promise and prophesy the death of Henricus, that he bid his auditors no more to take him for Pope, but to pluck him from the altar, if the said Henry did not die, or were not dejected from his kingdom, before the feast of St Peter then next ensuing. But the event proved the Pope a liar in the pulpit; and therefore, I hope, took from him all impossibility of lying *in cathedra*. Indeed, he laboured tooth and nail, by policy and sorcery, by his friends and fiends, to effect this. Innumerable were the plots of his treason. One among the rest is observable, in the letter of the said Cardinal Benno: that he had hired a villain, observing the place in the church where this emperor used to pray, to carry up to the roof of the church a great number and weight of stones, with purpose to let them fall down on the emperor's head at his devotion, and to knock out his brains; but the traitor being busy to remove a stone of an unwonted hugeness to the place, the plank whereon he stood broke; down they come both to the floor of the church, and the stone (for it seems his own impiety made him the heavier, to fall first to his centre) fell on him, and quashed him to pieces.

But what speak I of their particular treasons? A private treachery was but like the French tourney at Chalons—*parvum bellum*, a little war. We are to consider their great fires which they have kindled in the Christian world, when the princes would never have broke mutual peace, had not the devil set on the Pope, and the Pope set on them to this eager contention. But lightly as Mars and money made them popes, so Mars and simony held them rich popes. And now, through Satan's help, they have brought it about, that as at first no pope might be chosen without the emperor, so now no emperor must be chosen without the pope. Both the swords are their claim, and they will have them both, or they will lift them up both against the deniers; and where the sword spiritual may not be admitted, they will make way for it with the sword temporal. It is fit, they say, that they should bear temporal rule that follow nearest to God: but the Pope and his clergy follow nearest to God: therefore are the fittest men to rule. It is answered, if God be here taken for that god which St Paul speaks of, the belly, Phil. iii. 19, they follow nearest indeed. From the other and only true God, they are far enough. If they were not, they would use only spiritual war against the kingdom of Satan, and not meddle with temporal war against the kingdoms of Christian princes. Plead what they can from the wrested Scriptures and misunderstood fathers, yet *frustra apostolica auctoritas pretenditur, ubi apostolica Scriptura contemnitur*,—in vain is apostolic authority pretended, where apostolic Scripture is despised or perverted. *Non eripit mortalia, qui regna dat caelestia*,—That God warrants not the taking away of earthly kingdoms, that gives the kingdom of heaven.

(2.) The second general fire he kindles is error and heresy, a burning river of poison; that cup of abomination which he reacheth out to the world in the hand of that great Babylonian whore. To maintain this fire he calls councils, enacts laws, teacheth many parliaments the promulgation of bloody statutes; and whereas other laws of princes (tending to the ruin of iniquity) are ever neglected, those that are made against Christians have been most severely executed. And lest the devil in this should appear like himself, the prince of death and darkness, he sits thundering in the Pope's mouth like an angel of light, and so directs him; that under *In Dei nomine, Amen*, he unmercifully condemneth his brother. So that the usurpation of a divine dispensation must burn the poor members of Christ at the fiery stakes. Now this fire he kindleth by two malicious courses:—

[1.] By obscuring the light of the gospel from men's eyes, and hardening their affection to darkness. So that the children of the night have so doted upon ignorance, that they hate and persecute all the means and messengers of illumination. Shine the sun never so bright, the Papists will see nothing but candle-light. Therefore, it may be, they are permitted tapers, torches, and candles, to content their carnal devotion, that they might not spiritually desire 'the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the image of God,' 2 Cor. iv. 4. And if ever their caliginous minds spy the least glimmering of zeal, or feel a little turning from their former impieties, the shrine, picture, or image of some saint hath the glory of their conversion. A very block shall have the praise rather than God. But we can hardly believe they are converted from darkness to light that fetch their illumination out of a stone.

It is recorded that, at Amesbury, when Queen Elinor, the wife of King Henry the Third, lay there, a man that famed himself to have been long blind, came to her, and told her that he had now his sight restored again at the tomb of King Henry, her deceased husband.* The mother easily believed it; but her son, King Edward the First, knowing this man, that he had been ever a dissolute wretch and vile impostor, dissuaded her from giving faith to it, protesting that he knew so well the justice of his father, that if he were living he would sooner pull out both the dissembler's eyes than restore sight to any one of them. So certainly those saints, to the virtue of whose dead bones these hypocrites attribute the glory of their conversion and enlightening, would, if they were living, rather say these men had no eyes of grace at all, than that any light was given them out of their dead dusts or painted resemblances. This is Satan's first project, to cast a thick cloud of invincible ignorance between men's eyes and the clear sun.

[2.] By hindering all those that have a commission to preach it. Zech. iii. 1, 'He shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.' 'A door is opened, but there are many adversaries,' saith the Apostle. 1 Thess. ii. 18, 'will you hear the principal adversary?' 'We would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.' The good minister hath no adversary in his calling but he is of the devil's raising. And herein he is either a wolf or a fox, effecting this either by public opposition or secret corruption:—

First, Openly he sets not only his principalities infernal, but also powers terrestrial, against it. What preacher ever began to sing, with a clear breast, the songs of Zion, for many hundred years under the Pope's reach, but instantly pope, cardinals, friars, devils, cursed him with bells and candles, and were ready to burn him in flames? *Scivit mundus, cum ostenditur immun-*
*—**us*,—The world is mad, that his dominion and damnation should be spoken against.

Secondly, Secretly he hinders the free preaching of the gospel, by corrupting their hearts that are deputed to that office. And this he effecteth by infusion of these four hellish ingredients: heresy against truth, schism against peace, popularity against simplicity, and covetise against charity.

First, He poisons some hearts with heretical points of doctrine, which being (lightly) most pleasing to the flesh, are drunk with thirsty attention. Heresy is thus defined: *humano sensu electa, Scripturæ sacræ contraria, palam docta, pertinaciter defensa*,—begot of man's brain, contrary to the Holy Scriptures, openly taught, and peremptorily defended. By this, so far

* Act. et Mon. ex Chron. Rob. Amesburiensis.

as the flesh in man prevails against the Spirit, Satan prevails against the truth. So that if they must needs have any of the pure gold of God's word, it shall be so sophisticated, adulterate, and mingled with the dross of human traditions, that they shall not be able to perceive or receive it.

Secondly, Those whom he cannot corrupt against truth he incenseth against peace. Division shall accomplish that mischief which error failed in. Whom he cannot transport to Rome, he ferries over to Amsterdam. He will either keep men on this side the truth, or send them beyond it. Error on the right hand shall cast away souls, if error on the left cannot. Some run so far from Babylon, that they will not keep near Jerusalem; as men that run so eagerly from a lion that they refuge themselves in the hole of a serpent. The schismatic meets with the Romanist in superstition another way. Thus *quibus nequit tollere veritatem, negat permittere unitatem*,—if he cannot deprive us of truth, he will not permit us peace.

Thirdly, By persuading men to be temporisers, and to catch at the favours of great men. Thus when a preacher must measure his sermon by his lord's humour, the truth of the Lord of hosts is smothered. Against oppression he dares not speak, because it is his lord's fault; not against pride, because it is his lady's; not against riot, because it is his young master's; nor against drunkenness, because they favour it whom his great one favours. He must not meddle with those ulcers which he sees to stick on his patron's conscience. That were the way to lose both present benefit and future benefice; he dares not do it. Whiles he is their servile chaplain, he must learn Turkey-work, to make thrummed cushions of flattery for their elbows. It seems it was not God's business that such a one made himself minister for, but his own, or worse. He hath three masters: he serves his lord, he serves himself, he serves the devil; which of these will pay him the best wages? Thus if Satan can neither take away the truth nor peace, yet he labours against simplicity; that for fear of men and hope of means they forbear to speak against wickedness. What his kingdom loseth one way, it recovers another.

Fourthly, By infecting their hearts with covetousness, and extending their desires to an insatiable wealth. With this pill he poisoned Demas, and Judas before him, and thousands after him. The chair of Rome is filled with this pestilence. England hath found it, though many princes will not find it, when the revenues of the crown amounted not to half the Pope's yearly taxes. But we are well eased of that unsupportable burden. Edward the Third began it, for he first made the *Præmunire* against the Pope; and our succeeding Christian princes have quite thrown him out of the saddle. God did not make his law so long but man might easily remember it, comprising it all in ten commandments. But the Pope hath curtailed it, and made it far shorter, abridging the ten commandments into two words: *Da pecuniam*,—Give money. And for this the whole law shall be dispensed with. Experience hath still proved that money was the apostolical arguments of Rome. An emperor paid for his absolution a hundred and twenty thousand ounces of gold: a dear reckoning for those wares that cost the Pope nothing!

In the reign of Henry the Third the Pope required the tenths of all the moveables in England, Ireland, and Wales; and because he feared that such moneys could not be speedily enough collected, he sent over many usurers into the land, which were then called *Coursini*, who would lend money to those of the clergy that wanted, but on so unreasonable extortion that the debtors were still beggared. So that what by his violent exaction and subtle

circumvention by his own usurers, (for all they had was the Pope's money,) he desired only the tenth part, but he got away also the other nine. And indeed the Pope had reason to maintain usury, for usury maintained the Pope. Neither is this infection bounded up with that bishop, but dissipated among all his clergy. Not so much as the very mendicant friars, that profess wilful poverty, but have a wilful desire to be rich. They have more holiness in their hands than in their hearts; their hands touch no money, their hearts covet it. But the great Belphegor sometimes gives them a purge. Whereupon said W. Swinderby, 'If the Pope may take from the friars to make them keep St Francis's rule, why may not the emperor take from the Pope to make him keep Christ's rule?'* But, whosoever gets, the poor laity loseth all. There was a book called *Pœnitentiarius Asini*, 'The Ass's Confessor,' wherein is mentioned this fable: The wolf, the fox, and the ass come to shrift together, to do penance. The wolf confesseth himself to the fox, who easily absolveth him. The fox doth the like to the wolf, and receiveth the like favour. After this the ass comes to confession, and his fault was, that being hungry he had taken out one straw from the sheaf of a pilgrim to Rome, whereof he was heartily repentant. But this would not serve; the law was executed severely upon him: he was slain and devoured. By the wolf is meant the Pope; by the fox, his cardinals, Jesuits, priests: these quickly absolve one another, how heinous soever their offences are. But when the poor ass—that is the laity—comes to shrift, though his offence be not the weight and worth of a straw, yet on his back must the law be severely executed; and the holy father, the wolf, makes a great matter of it.

'Immensum scelus est, injuria quam peregrino,
Fecisti, stramen surripiendo sibi.'

Oh, the insatiable gulf of that sea! God grant that none of that infection ever come over amongst the ministers of the gospel! There is nothing more absurd than that those which teach others to seek the kingdom of heaven and to despise the world, should be found to embrace the world with the neglect of heaven.

These are the general fires this malicious incendiary kindles. There are also two particular and special, which he inflameth in private men's hearts; whereby he prepossesseth them with a prejudicial dis-estimation of the gospel, for causes either direct or oblique. Directly for itself, or obliquely and by consequence for private ends:—

(1.) First he begets in a man's mind a dislike of the word for itself. This man esteems preaching but folly: he sees no good it doth to have one prattling an hour or two in a pulpit. He is a parishioner to two parishes: to the congregation he lives with, *quoad corpus*; to the synagogue of Satan, *quoad animam*. 1 Cor. i. 18, 'The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.' It is horrible when man—dust and ashes, mere folly—shall censure the wisdom of God. Let them have their wills, be it in their account folly; yet 'it pleaseth God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe,' ver. 21. And without this they must live in error, and die in terror: hell-fire will make them change their opinions.

(2.) Others are wrought to hate it only for second and sinister respects. The masters of that damsel, Acts xvi., 'possessed with a spirit of divination, seeing the hope of their gains gone,' brought Paul and Silas to scourging, and never left them till they saw them in prison. When Demetrius per-

* Act. and Mon.

ceived the ruin, not so much of the Ephesian Diana, as of his own Diana,—gain and commodity in making of silver shrines,—he sets all Ephesus in a tumult, Acts xix. 24. The loss of profit or pleasure by the gospel is ground enough of malice and madness against it. Cannot a tyrant be bloody, cannot an oppressor depopulate, a usurer make benefit of his money, a swearer brave with blasphemies, a drunkard keep his tavern-session, but the pulpits must ring of it? Down shall that gospel come, if they can subject it, that will not let them run to hell untroubled. *Non turbant evangelio, dum ob evangelium non turbentur*,—Let them alone, and they will let you alone. But if you fight against their sins with the sword of the Spirit, they will have you by the ears, and salute you with the sword of death. You see the fires that the devil kindleth. It is objected—

Obj. 1.—Satan knows that he can do nothing but by the permission of God. *Answer.*—Therefore, not knowing God's secret will, who are elect, who reprobate, he labours to destroy all. And if he perceive that God more especially loves any, have at them to choose. If he can but bruise their heels, oh, he thinks he hath wrought a great spite to God.

Obj. 2.—He knows that though with his tail he can draw stars from heaven, discover the hypocrisy of great professors, yet he cannot wipe the name of one soul out of the book of life which the Lamb hath written there. *Answer.*—It is the devil's nature to sin against his own knowledge. *Contra scientiam peccabit, qui contra conscientiam peccavit.*

Obj. 3.—He knows he shall receive the greater damnation, and the more aggravated torments. 'And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever,' Rev. xix. 20. *Answer.*—He sins always with purposed malice of heart, proudly against God, and blasphemously against the Holy Ghost, though he receive the smart himself.

4. We perceive now the fire, the fuel, and the kindler; let us look to the smoke. There goes lightly a smoke before this fire: Rev. ix. 2, 'He opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth.' When we see smoke, we conclude there is fire. Christ will not quench the smoking flax; for the smoke without shews a spark of faith within. When Abraham saw 'the smoke of the country going up as the smoke of a furnace,' Gen. xix. 28, he knew that the fire was begun in Sodom. This smoke is the sign of persecution ensuing; and it is either public or private. Public is twofold:—

(1.) The threatening of tyrants: this smoke came out of the mouth of Saul: Acts ix. 1, 'And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings.' Such were the Romish vaunts of the Spanish ships; but God quenched that fire in water, and it was but a smoke. He that could forbid the fire to burn, Dan. iii. 25, can also forbid the smoke to become a flame. Only the massacre at Paris was a fire without a smoke; unless it be smoke enough (as indeed it is) for Papists to live among Protestants.

(2.) Security is a public smoke: when men cry, Peace, peace; this is the smoke of war. The careless lives of the old world and Sodom were portentous smokes of their enkindled destruction. Our secure and dead-hearted conversations are arguments of the like to us. God both avert that, and convert us! We feast, revel, dance, sin, and sing, like swans, the prognostics of our own funerals. We are not circumspect to look upon those which

watch us with the keen eyes of malice; our sleep gives them hope and ourselves danger. Neglect of defence heartens on a very coward enemy. Our comfort only is, 'He that keepeth Israel doth not slumber nor sleep,' Ps. cxxi. 4.

The private smoke, particularly laid to a Christian, is a gentler and more soft temptation. But if this smoke prevail not, Satan comes with a fiery trial. If he cannot pervert Joseph with his tempting mistress, a kind smoke, he will try what a jail can do. If the devil can draw thee to his purpose with a twine-thread, what needs he a cable-rope? If Samson can be bound with green withs, the Philistines need not seek for iron chains. But Satan knows that some will not, like Adam and Esau, be won with trifles; that some will stick to Christ while the weather is fair and there is peace with the gospel, yet in time of persecution start away, Matt. xiii. 21. When he comes with tempests and floods, then the house not built on a rock falls, Matt. vii. 27. If our foundation be straw and stubble, we know this fire will consume; but if gold, it shall rather purge and purify it.

He will not go about that can pass the next way. If a soft puff can turn thee from Christ, Satan will spare his blustering tempests; if a smoke can do it, the fire shall be forborne. If Job could have been brought to his bow, with killing his cattle, servants, children, perhaps his body had been favoured. So that after gentle temptations look for storms; as thou wouldest, after smoke, for fire. Inure thy heart therefore to vanquish the least, that thou mayest foil the greatest; let the former give thee exercise against these latter, as with wooden wasters men learn to play at the sharp. Be thy confidence in him that ever enabled thee; and affy his promise that will not suffer thee 'to be tempted above thy strength.' Only handle this weapon with more heedful cunning; and when thou perceivest the dalliyings of the devil, play not with his baits. Corrupt not thy conscience with a little gain, so shalt thou withstand more. Think the easiest temptations a porpoise before a tempest, smoke before fire, signs and prodiges* of a fearful conflict to come.

5. There remains nothing now to be considered but the *bellows*; that help to maintain this fire. The bellows are double: passive and active. Some blow because they cannot, others because they will not, avoid it.

(1.) The passive bellows are the godly: for they must have no peace with wickedness, 'no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,' Eph. v. 11. We must love their persons, and pray for them, as Christ for his crucifiers. But if they will not be converted, if they cannot be suppressed, we may desire either their conversion or confusion: as God wills none to perish as a creature, but as a sinful creature; not of his own making, but of their own marring. So we must hate not *virum*, but *vitium*; reproving and condemning evil works, both by our lips and lives: though our good conversation be the passive bellows to blow this fire.

(2.) The active are the wicked: who do profoundly hate the good, in regard of both their actions and their persons. To this their own forwardness is helped by the devil's instigation: 'If thou blow the spark, it shall burn; if thou spit upon it, it shall be quenched: and both these come out of thy mouth,' Eccclus. xxviii. 12.

But all men love good naturally. No, not all; for some have not only extinguished the flames of religion, but even the very sparks of nature in their hearts.

But some wicked men have loved the godly. True, but not for their ac-

* That is, portents or indications.—Ed.

tions, not for their persons, not of their own natures. But, first, either because God snaffles the horses and mules, and curbs the malicious rage of tyrants : or, secondly, converts them to the faith and obedience of his truth ; as he took Saul from his raging cruelty, and made him ready to die for him whose servants he would have killed ; so turning a wolf into a lamb : or, thirdly, else they love the good for some benefit by them ; and therein they love not them, so much as themselves in them. So Ahasuerus loved Esther for her beauty ; Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel for his wisdom ; Potiphar, Joseph because his house prospered by him ; and for this cause did the former Pharaoh affect him.

But otherwise, with blood-red eyes, and faces sparkling fire, they behold us ; as Haman did Mordecai. They plot like Machiavels, rail like Rabshakehs, and conspire like Absaloms. These are the devil's bellows here, to blow quarrels among men ; and shall be his bellows in hell to blow the fire of their eternal torments. A man that is great both in wealth and wickedness cannot be without these bellows—intelligencers, informers, tale-bearers. Let these seditious spirits understand their employment ; they are the devil's bellows : and when their service is done, they shall be thrown into the fire.

I conclude. All this trouble and calamity shall be but upon the earth ; so saith our Saviour : ' I come to send fire on the earth.' In heaven shall be no distraction to break our peace. We should be too well affected to the world, if it had this privilege and exemption ; but in vain we seek it where it is not to be found. In heaven only we shall find it, in heaven only let us seek it. Here we may have *desiderium pacis*, but there only *pacem desiderii*,—here the desires of peace, there peace of our desires. Now then, ' the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus !' Amen.