

THE TWO SONS;

OR,

THE DISSOLUTE CONFERRED WITH THE HYPOCRITE.

But what think you ? A certain man had two sons ; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not : but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir : but he went not.—MATT. XXI. 28–30.

THE priests and elders quarrel with our Saviour, ver. 23, about his authority. Christ requites them, by demanding their opinion concerning the baptism of John. Here is question against question : the Jews appose Jesus, Jesus apposeth the Jews. Neither of them doth answer the other : the elders could and durst not, our Saviour could and would not. Indeed, Christ's very question was a sufficient answer and resolution of their demand ; their own consciences bearing against them invincible witness, that as John's baptism, so our Saviour's authority, was immediately derived from heaven.

Well, the former question would not be answered : now Christ puts another to them ; if with any better success. The other they understand, but dare not answer ; this they dare answer, but not understand, lest they should conclude themselves those hypocritical sons that say they will, and do not, against whom heaven-gate is so fast shut that publicans and harlots shall first be admitted. 'But what think you ?' If you dare not open your lips, I appeal to your hearts ; your tongues may be kept silent, your consciences cannot be insensible. I come to your thoughts : 'What think you ?'

In the body of this discourse are three special members : the proposition of a parable ; a question inferred on it ; the application of it. The parable itself is contained in the words of my text : 'A certain man had two sons,' &c. The question, ver. 31, 'Whether of them twain did the will of the father ? They say to him, The first.' The application concludes, 'Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.'

The parable itself shall limit my speech, and your attention for this time.

There is an induction, 'A certain man had two sons.' A production, which consists of a double charge, a double answer, a double event:—1. Here is the father's charge to his eldest son: 'Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.' 2. His answer is negative: 'I will not.' 3. His obedience was affirmative: 'He repented and went.' So, 1. The father's command to his younger son was the same. 2. His answer is affirmative: 'I go, sir.' 3. The event was negative: 'He went not.' You hear the propositions; assume to yourselves, and the conclusion will tell you whether of these sons you are.

In the first was no show, all action; in the second all show, no action. They were diametrically cross and opposite in their words and works. In their words, one said, 'I will not;' the other, 'I will.' In their works, the one did, the other did not. In the one was no promise, but a performance; in the other no performance, but a promise. The first spoke ill, but did well; the second spoke well, but did ill. Either was faulty, one in words, the other in deeds.

I.—1. We will begin, according to our proposed method, with the father's charge to his eldest son: 'Son, go and work to-day in my vineyard;' wherein we have, (1.) An appellation; (2.) An excitation; (3.) An injunction; (4.) A limitation of time; (5.) A direction of place:—The appellation, 'son;' the incitation, 'go;' the injunction, 'work;' the limitation of time, 'to-day;' the direction of place, 'in my vineyard.'

(1.) The appellation: 'son.' God doth lay the imposition of labour upon his sons. The charge of working in the vineyard belongs to a Christian, not only as he is a servant, but even as he is a son to God. Indeed God hath no son but he that serves him. David was a great king, yet the title he delights himself in was servant,—as appears by his doubling and varying the word,—which he spake not in compliment, but in sincerity of heart: 'O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thy hand-maid;' and, that I may the better serve thee, 'thou hast loosed my bonds,' Ps. cxvi. 16, released me from the servitude of sin. For none but free-men are God's servants.

It is customary with men on earth to make difference betwixt their servants, their friends, their sons. Good servants we love well, yet respect as servants, not trusting them with the secrets of our bosoms. They know our commands, not counsels: to them the execution of our wills, our intentions to ourselves. Good friends we hold in a dearer regard: neglecting no time, place, or other circumstantial demonstration of our loves; yet still account them other from ourselves, no part of our charge; and seldom ariseth anxiety from any careful provision for them. But our children, as the sweet resultancies and living pictures of ourselves,—a kind of eternity lent to our bodies, who in some sort die not whiles their offspring lives,—these we principally affect; and they inherit our loves and lands. There is no such difference with God; all these are one in his estimation. His servants are his friends, his friends his sons, and his sons are his servants. Only all the trial, whether we be friends or sons, stands in this, if we be servants. If thou be my son, work in my vineyard. The son is not exempted from doing his father's business. Even the natural Son of God, and that by an eternal generation, doth not extricate himself from this charge, nor shift from his shoulders the imposition of labour: Phil. ii. 6, 7, 'Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; yet made himself of no reputation,' &c., *induit formam servi*,—took upon him the form of a servant. Christ so answered his mother returning from the feast, and after much search finding him, 'How is it that you sought me? Wist you not that I must be

about my Father's business?' Luke ii. 49. So he preached to his disciples, 'I must work the works of him that sent me,' John ix. 4.

Without this, vain is the ostentation of other titles. Many and excellent are the attributions which the Scripture giveth us; as friends, children, heirs, &c. Most men arrogate these, as the sweet privileges of ease, honour, benefit. They imagine that facility, a soft and gentle life, is hence warranted: that it is glory enough to be God's friend or son. Saul will be God's friend, if it be but for his kingdom. The Jews title themselves God's sons, that they may be his heirs. Whiles the door of adoption is thought to stand open in the gospel, infinite flock in thither; not for love, but gain. Again, these stand most in affection; and, dwelling inwardly, may with the more ease be dissembled. The profession of many is like the mountebank's trunk, which his host seeing fairly bound with a gaudy cover, and weighty in poise, had his trust deceived with the rubbish and stones within.

Only service hath neither ease nor concealment allotted it, because it consists in a visible action. Many say they are God's friends, but they will do nothing for him. Let a distressed member of their Saviour pass by them, with never so hearty beseechings and pitiful complaints, they are dry nurses; not a drop of milk comes from them. Call you these God's friends? Let profane swaggerers blaspheme God's sacred name; where is their controlment? They cannot endure a serpent, yet give close society to a blasphemer; whereas this wretch is worse than anything. For every creature doth praise God in his kind; yea, the very dragons and loathsome toads after their fashion: Ps. cxlviii. 7, 'Praise the Lord, ye dragons, and all deeps.' Yet this caitiff, like a mad dog, flies in his master's face that keeps him. Whoso can endure this, and not have their blood rise, and their very souls moved, are no friends to God. It is a poor part of friendship to stand silent by whiles a friend's good name is traduced. Such a man is possessed with a dumb devil. If men were God's friends, they would frequent God's house: there is little friendship to God where there is no respect of his presence, nor affection to his company. Our Saviour thoroughly decides this: 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you,' John xv. 14. There is no friendship where no obedience; neither shall the rebellious ever hear that welcome invitation to God's feast: 'Eat, O friends; drink and be merry, O beloved,' Cant. v. 1. There is, then, no friend to God but his servant.

Some claim kindred of God, that they are his offspring, Acts xvii. 29, and 'made partakers of the divine nature,' 2 Pet. i. 4; though not really, yet by renovation. But we know Christ distinguished his kindred in the spirit from those in the flesh, by this mark of audience and obedience: 'He that heareth my word, and doth it, is to me a mother, or a sister, or a brother.'

There are that challenge a filiality: as the Jews, 'We have one Father, even God.' To whom Christ answers, 'If God were your Father, you would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God,' John viii. 41, 42. If you were the children of God, you would surely know your elder brother. God, by the prophet Malachi, nonsuits that plea, 'If I be your father, where is mine honour?' chap. i. 6. Still no good title is ours without service; whether thou be friend, or kindred, or son, go and work in my vineyard.

Casting over this whole reckoning, we find the sum this: God hath few friends, kindred, sons, because he hath few servants. How many have promised good hopes to themselves, and not unlikely to us, that they were God's children, against whom the gate of heaven hath been shut for want of actual service! Let men never plead acquaintance, familiarity, sonship, when God

tries them, as this son, what they will do for him, and they refuse to work in his vineyard. It must be the word, written on the scutcheon of every true Christian soldier, though the Son himself hath made him free, and he is free indeed—I SERVE. And yet some, as they presume themselves to be God's sons, so they assume to be his servants; and have evidence to neither of these claims. They will be held God's servants, yet never did good char in his house. Religion is his livery, which once getting on their backs, they think themselves safe; and, as many a lewd fellow doth a nobleman's cloth, make it a countenance and protection to their wicked lives. They may, not unfitly, be compared to retainers; for as great men's retainers lightly visit their lord once by the year, and that at Christmas, and then rather for good cheer than love: so these deal with God; come to his table at Easter, and then they will feast with him, that the world may take notice they belong to him; which done, they bid him farewell till the next year.

It was a worthy observation, that all sins do strive to make God serve us. So God tells Israel, Isa. xlii. 14, *Servire me fecisti*,—‘Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins.’ Not only that God danceth attendance to our reversion,—that exposition is too short,—but God in his plentiful blessings doth serve our turns, which we abusing to riot, and supplying the fire of our own lusts with his good fuel, we make God serve us. Which of us in this congregation exempts himself from that style of God's servant? Yet how many here so live, as if God were rather their servant! God blesseth the vintage, and hangs the boughs with abundant clusters; he fills the valleys with corn, that the loaden scythe fetcheth a little compass: wine is made of the one, strong drink of the other; and both these doth the drunkard sacrifice to his throat. That is the god he adores, and the God of heaven is fain to serve him. The glutton is fed liberally from God's trencher; the fowls of the air, fishes of the sea, all the delicacies of nature, are of his providing. God thus serves the epicure, and the epicure his belly, Phil. iii. 19. The angry man, like the two hot disciples that called for fire from heaven, ordains himself the judge, and would have God turn his executioner. The ambitious politician worships the chair of honour with most rank idolatry, and useth religion as a servile arm to help him up to it; wherein once seated, he will scarce thank God for his service. Thus, as Solomon saith, ‘I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth,’ Eccles. x. 7. The basest drudge, lust, is highly honoured, whiles the Prince of princes is put to a servile office. But woe unto him that is whirled in coaches through the popular streets, and makes God his lacquey, and religion a foot-boy to run after him! God will not ever dance attendance to us; and when he is once gone quite from us, we shall never be able to recover him.

Well, sons we are, yet this appears by our services in the vineyard; natural proportion requires this. If God be so gracious to us, as to fetch us by a strong arm through death and blood from the servitude of Satan, and in a sweet ineffable mercy to adopt us his own children, it is fit we should return him obedience. ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate from the unclean, and I will receive you: and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty,’ 2 Cor. vi. 17. Not that our adoption doth depend upon our separation from the wicked, but, *first*, to give testimony to the world, and to our own conscience, that we are God's children, by refusing society—if not *cum operatoribus*, yet *cum operibus tenebrarum*—and fellowship with the works of darkness; *secondly*, to shew that the mercy of God and our amendment of life must go together. For God gives not remission of sin without contrition for sin. Where is

forgiveness, there is also repentance. The blood and water which issued out of Christ's blessed side must not be parted. Every man catcheth at his blood, but few care for his water. The blood signifies our justification, the water our sanctification. We would be justified, we will not be sanctified. But those two cannot possibly be sundered. They came together out of his side, and they must be together in our hearts. God will never accept him for just that will not be holy; nor acquit that soul of her sins that will not amend her life.

So that if God have indented with us to save us as sons, we must indent with him to serve him as servants. 'The heir, so long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all,' Gal. iv. 1. It hath pleased God to adopt us co-heirs with his blessed Son to an immortal inheritance; yet so long as we live on earth, we are but in our minority, and therefore differ not from servants. Though he gives us the vineyard, yet we must first work in it. 'Blessed is that good servant,' Matt. xxiv. 45, that ruleth the household of his affections, and giveth due sustenance to all the faculties of his soul, understanding, memory, conscience. But woe to that 'evil servant,' to whose outward misgovernment is added an inward riot, and heedless regard to his own lusts!

I have read a parable to moralise this. A great prince, intending travel into a far country, left his daughter to the tuition of a servant. Him he made chief, and set under him a controller and five serviceable guardians. The prince no sooner gone, but the servant falls to lust and riot; forceth the lady, the controller, and the guardians to the like intemperance; which they refusing, he despoils her of her robes and jewels, them of their weapons, and turns them forth either by beggary or pillage to seek their livings. This servant is man, God is the prince, his daughter the soul, the controller is reason, and the five senses the guardians. Whiles these hinder man from spoiling his soul with riot, he abuseth them; turns reason to madness, and makes all his senses instruments of wickedness. But woe to that servant whom his lord coming shall find so doing!

I conclude this point. If thou be my son, serve me, saith God. It was David's holy ambition, and our happy bliss, to be the lowest drudge in God's family. To be a monarch of men is less than to be an underling of saints. *Non reputes magnum quod Deo servis, sed maximum reputa, quod ipse dignatur te in servum assumere,**—It is no ordinary favour that God will vouchsafe thee to be his servant, yet hath he made us his sons; let us, then, carry ourselves as the sons of so great a prince. The children of kings, not only in their serious studies, but even in their recreations, bear a greater port, and hold a higher intention, than the children of subjects. Their very sports are not so base as the object of pins and points, and such slight toys. Let worldlings stoop with a grovelling baseness to the trash of this world, and write their low desires in the dust; let us remember our birth and breeding,—I mean our new birth and sanctification,—and carry ourselves like the sons of so great a king. Our work in the vineyard is a holy work, and God will crown it with a rich mercy: 'They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him,' Mal. iii. 17.

In that the father chargeth his eldest son to work, I might derive a moral observation, and instruct some to pull back that over-partial indulgence which they give to the eldest. It is the fashion with us to make the eldest a gentleman, though the rest be left beggars. The privilege of primogeniture

* Bern.

so sweeps away all from the younger, that they are often enforced to serve the elder. The causes most commonly are, either an ambitious desire of enhancing our names. We think a great many stars make not so fair a show as one sun: therefore join land to land, living to living, and give all to the eldest, not regarding whether younger Jacob be more virtuous. I speak not this to deprive the first-born of his right. Though God be not tied to primogeniture, as appears by Israel's laying his right hand upon Ephraim's head, and his left upon Manasseh's, Gen. xlviii. 14; yet with men it is often seen that the disinheriting the eldest proves the ruin of the whole posterity. I speak only to help the others with a just and fit portion. Or, perhaps, the cause hereof is, a special affection we bear to one child more than to another, and not after their merits, but our own dotage, prefer them; as Isaac loved Esau, and Rebekah Jacob, Gen. xxv. 28. Or, most likely, a covetous desire of procuring great marriage-portions to our eldest, whom we have famed for our sole and entire heirs.

But the father here sets his eldest son to work. If any business be to be done, our custom is to impose all on the younger, and favour the elder. It is enough for him to see fashions abroad. This indulgence too often turns to ruin; for long unrestrained wantonness, and unchidden pride, teacheth him at last, though his now dead father left him much lands, to carry them all up in his purse to London; whence he lightly brings nothing down, but a few new-fangled rags, or perhaps a church on his back, and the bells at his heels; as one said of the church-robber's heir with jingling spurs. Too many run to such riot in the April of their years, that they soon bring December on their houses, and sell their patrimony to some supplanter for pottage. They so toss and bandy their estates, from vanity to vanity, from madness to madness, till at last they fall into the usurer's hazard. And once lying at the extortioner's mercy by forfeit, it is as surely damned as the extortioner himself will be when he lies at the mercy of the devil. The mind having once caught the trick of running out, is hardly banked in. He that is used to a torch scorns to go with a candle. It is a good course: let them work in the vineyard before they have it, they will keep it the better when they have it. But some fathers are so dotingly kind, that they put themselves out of their estates to fasten them on their eldest son. Alas, poor men! how few of them ever die without cursing the time when they made themselves slaves to their cradles!

The prolixity of this point shall be recompensed with the succeeding brevity of the rest. We have done with the appellation: now follows—

(2.) The *incitation*: 'go.' This is a word of instigation to sedulity and forwardness in the service of our Father. Every son of God must be going. The servants under the law were commanded to eat the passover 'with their shoes on their feet,' Exod. xii. 11; and St Paul may seem to allude to it, when he bids the children of the gospel 'stand with your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,' Eph. vi. 15. So long as we are standing, there is hope we will be going. It is not permitted to us to sit down in the midst of our race. Christ telleth his apostles, 'When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,' Matt. xix. 28. But we know our Saviour dearly earned that voice, before he heard it from his Father, 'Son, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.' Before he heard this *requiem*, he complained that 'the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man no resting-place for his head.' We must so apprehend God's voice: 'Go, my son.' When God found Elias laid under the

juniper-tree, he sends him sustenance, and bids him 'arise and eat.' And being laid down again, the angel again 'touched him, saying, Arise and eat; the journey is too great for thee,' 1 Kings xix. 5-7. Strengthen thy heart, O Christian; sit not down as if thou wert perfect, thou hast a great journey to go.

Every one thinks himself God's son: then hear his voice, 'Go, my son.' You have all your vineyards to go to. Magistrates, go to the bench, to execute judgment and justice; ministers, go to the temple, to preach, to pray, to do the work of evangelists; people, go to your callings, that you may eat the labours of your own hands. Eye to thy seeing, ear to thy hearing, foot to thy walking, hand to thy working; Peter to thy nets, Paul to thy tents; every man to his profession, according to that station wherein God hath disposed us. So Origen comments upon Abraham's family, for their entertaining the three angels, Gen. xviii. 6: *Senex currit, mulier festinat, puer accelerat; nullus piger invenitur domo sapientis*,—Sarah goes quickly to knead the flour, Abraham runs to the herd for a calf, the servant makes haste to dress it; here is none idle in the wise man's family. The incitation gives way to—

(3.) The *injunction*: 'work.' The labour of a Christian is like the labour of a husbandman; whereof I have read this proverb, that it returns into a ring: the meaning is, it is endless; they have perpetually somewhat to do, either ploughing, or sowing, or reaping, &c. Idleness is of itself against the law of Scripture, against the law of nature: *Deus maximus invisibilium, mundus maximus visibilium*,—God, the greatest of invisible natures; the world, the greatest of visible creatures; neither of them is idle. Plato could say, that *sapientes majorem cum vitiis, quam cum inimicis pugnam gerunt*,—wise men have a greater skirmish with their own vices and lusts than with foreign swords. There is enough in every man to keep him from idleness; if at least he do not prefer an unjust peace to a just war.

For us men, and for our salvation, (such was our weakness,) came the Son of God from heaven, (such was his kindness;) gave battle for us to the devil, and world, and all the enemies of our salvation, (such was his goodness;) gave them all the overthrow, (such was his greatness.) What! that we should therefore sit still and take our ease? No, but rather to encourage our labour, and hearten us to a happy success. God hath so proportioned things and their events, that they who will rest in the time of labour shall labour in the time of rest. This is our day of labour, hereafter follows our Sabbath of rest; if we will loiter when we should work, we shall work when we should rest, and feel the eternal throbs of an ever-wounded and wounding conscience. In that other parable of the vineyard, Matt. xx., the wages comes not to the servant till he hath wrought in the vineyard; nor here the inheritance to the son. The idle man is the devil's cushion; he sits on him, and takes his ease freely. If you would take the devil's muster-book, and rake hell for a rabble of reprobates,—nasty drunkards, blown swearers, stalled gluttons,—I might say of them all, as the poet of *Ægistus*, how he became an adulterer: *In promptu causa est, desidiosus erat*,—The cause is ready, they were idle. Work is the injunction. If you ask when and how long—

(4.) The *limitation* of time instructs you: 'to-day.' We need not grudge God our labour; it is but a day wherein we are enjoined to work: Ps. civ. 23, 'Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour until the evening;' not only that little part of time, the artificial day, as they call it, but even his whole natural day of life, till his sun set. Christ thus instructs us in his

own example, and that with a *must*, a word of necessity: 'I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: for the night cometh, when no man can work,' John ix. 4. The rich man, Luke xii., had his day: which because he spent in filling his barns with corn, and not his heart with repentance, at evening was rung his soul-knell, 'Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul of thee; then whose are those things which thou hast provided?' Luke xii. 10. Christ spake it not with dry eyes to Jerusalem: 'If thou hadst known, *at least in this thy day*, the things which belong unto thy peace!' Luke xix. 42. The next is God's day. This our day hath no morrow to work in; then *Deus et dies ultionum convenient*,—the God of vengeance and the day of vengeance shall meet together. At night we must give account how we have spent our day; happy are we if we can make our reckoning even with God; a day misspent is lost. The good Emperor Vespasian, if he had heard no causes, or done no charitable act, would complain to his courtiers at night, *Amici, diem perdidit*,—My friends, I have lost a day. I fear too many may say so of the whole day of their lives: I have lost my day.

Time is precious; and howsoever our pride and lusts think it, God so highly prizeth it, that he will punish the loss of a short time with a revenge beyond all times: the misspense of a temporal day with an eternal night. Every hour hath wings, and there is no moment passing from us but it flies up to the Maker of time, and bears him true tidings how we have used it. There is no usury tolerable but of two things, grace and time; and it is only blessed wealth that is gotten by improving them to the best. We brought with us into the world sin enough to repent of all our short day. There is no minute flies over our heads without new addition to our sins, and therefore brings new reason for our sorrows. We little think that every moment we misspend is a record against us in heaven, or that every idle hour is entered into God's registry, and stands there in capital letters till our repentant tears wash it out. The Ancient of days sees us fool away our time, as if we had eternity before us. Harlots, taverns, theatres, markets of vanity, take up whole weeks, months, years; and we are old ere we consider ourselves mortal. Not so many sands are left in the glass as a sparrow can take in her bill, before we think we have lost much time, or perceive we have no more to lose. Nothing is of that nature that life is; for it loseth by getting, diminisheth by increasing, and every day that is added to it is so much by a day taken from it. That very night which thou last slepest hath by a night shortened thy life. So insensibly runs away our time, though we entreat it never so earnestly to slacken the pace. How fond are they that invent for it pastimes!

This limitation of the time gives us a double encouragement to our cheerful working in God's vineyard:—

First, The shortness of our day. The saints have reckoned their time by days. So that aged patriarch to the Egyptian king: 'Few and evil have the days of thy servant been.' Here it is taken in the singular number, a day. So, Heb. iii. 13, 'To-day, if ye will hear God's voice, harden not your hearts;' Matt. xx. 6, 'Why stand ye here all the day idle?' It is a day, a short day, a winter's day. And, alas! it is but a little part of this day that we work. *Mulum temporis nobis eripitur, plus subducitur, plurimum effluit: exigua pars est vite quam nos vivimus*,*—Much of our time is violently snatched from us, more we are cozened of, most steals away insensibly; it is the least part of our life which we are properly said to live.

* Sen., Epist. 1.

Distinguish our day into a morning, noon, and evening. Our youth, which is our morning, we most usually (not usefully) spend in toys and vanities : as if it were not *vitium adolescenti scortari*, &c.,—a fault in a young man to wantonise, dance, drink, swear, swagger, revel. Our old age, which is our afternoon, for the most part is spent in caring, trouble, and anxiety for this world ; our distrustful hearts still asking, How shall we do when we are old ? yet being so old already, that there is no possible good means of spending what we have. So that here remains nothing but the noon of our day. As Epaminondas aptly said, Young men should be saluted with Good-morrow, or welcome into the world ; old men with Good-night, because they are taking their leaves of the world ; only men of middle age with Good-day. This mid-day is only left for the vineyard, and how much of it spend we in working there ?

Day-labourers use not to sleep at noon ; and yet we, for the most part, sleep out almost half our time : other hours are wasted in eating and drinking, other in playing ; and, that is worst of all, yet most of all in sinning. Now, behold the great part of our day which we spend in God's vineyard. Let the time before our conversion be deducted ; for then we were quite out of the vineyard : we were not awake. If a sleeping man may be said dead, then sure a dead man may be said asleep. And, indeed, sins are justly called *opera tenebrarum*, the works of the night, not of the light : no fit actions for the day. So that our unregenerate time hath stolen a great piece from our day. I have read of a courtier that, wearied with that few in these days will be wearied of,—glorious vanities, gallant miseries,—retired himself into the country, where he lived privately seven years. Dying, he caused this epitaph to be engraven on his tomb : *Hic jacet Similia, cujus ætas multorum annorum fuit : ipse duntaxat septem annos vixit* ;—

'Here lies Similia, whose age
Saw many years on this world's stage.
His own account is far less given,
He says he only lived seven ;'

esteeming the compass of his life no longer than his retiring himself from worldly vanities. So it may be said of a wicked old man : *Non diu vixit, sed diu fuit*,—He hath not lived long, but been long upon the earth. After this rule many good men have reckoned their years : not from the time of their birth, but of their new birth ; accounting only from that day when they were supernaturally born again, not when naturally born into the world : as if all that time were lost which an unsanctified life took up.

Secondly, That other heartening to our cheerful labour is, that when this short day is ended, our rest shall be eternal. Death shall deliver us of this travel ; and a life shall follow it, as incapable of pains-taking as it is of pain-suffering. 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them,' Rev. xiv. 13. Our labour in the vineyard is not lost : it is written in heaven ; and when our souls ascend thither, it shall meet us at the gate with joy. A man's good deeds are in heaven before him ; he that will not forget us, lets not one of them slip from his notice, or evade his memory. No good work is meritorious, yet none transient. God that loves not us for our good deeds, will love our good deeds for us. The person being justified in Christ, the sanctified work shall be had in remembrance. We rest now one day in seven ; but then, our Sabbath shall be more delightful, our rest more joyful, our temple heaven, our songs and psalms, hosannas and hallelujahs, and the continuance of all, eternity.

(5.) The time of our working is not only confined, but the place defined; this is the last circumstance of the charge: the *direction of place*, 'in my vineyard.'

Not in the wilderness of the world, nor in the labyrinth of lusts, nor in the orchard of vain delights, nor in the field of covetousness, nor in the house of security, much less in the chamber of wantonness, or tavern of drunkenness, or theatre of lewdness; but in my vineyard: do my work in my vineyard. We must not only be doing, but be doing what we ought. True obedience is a readiness to do as we are bidden. It is an everlasting rule that Paul gives: Rom. vi. 16, 'His servants ye are to whom ye obey.' The centurion so describeth his good servant: 'I bid him do this, and he doeth it.' It is only a laudable deed that hath in it *bene* as well as *bonum*. Many can take no pains unless the devil set them on work. They must be their own carvers in their employment, or they will sit idle. God sends them to his vineyard, and when he comes, finds them in the market, perhaps in a theatre, in a dicing-house, in a drinking-house. Let them appoint themselves their task, and God cannot have better servants; let him give the direction, and he cannot possibly have worse. So a man may work, and be over-diligent, yet have no thanks for his labour.

God scorns that the world or the flesh should set down rules how he will be served. He never made the devil his steward, to appoint his sons to their task. The king having made positive laws and decrees whereby he will govern either his public or private house, his kingdom or family, disdains that a groom should contradict and annul those, to dignify and advance other of his own fiction. Paul durst not 'confer with flesh and blood,' Gal. i. 16, when God had imposed on him an office. That obedience of Abraham, which was so highly praised, was punctually dependent on God's command. He is a sorry servant that, on the first bidding, runs away without his errand. There is a generation of men that are too laborious: curious statesmen in foreign commonwealths, busy bishops in others' dioceses, scolding their lips in their neighbour's pottage. This is an ambitious age of meddlers; there are almost as many minds as men, sects as cities, gospels as gossips: as if they laboured the reducing of the old chaos and first in-formity of things again. So the foxes do without labour make spoil of the grapes; and these endeavours do not help, but hurt the vineyard. Painfulness is not only required, but profitableness. Otherwise, as it is said of the schoolmen, they may *magno conatu nihil agere*,—take great pains to no purpose. The wise Ordinator of all things hath so disposed us in our stations, that in serving him, we serve one another. And it is an habitual part even of our liberty, that 'by love we serve one another,' Gal. v. 13. That byword, 'Every man for himself, and God for us all,' is uncharitable, ungodly, and impugneth directly the end of every good calling, and honest kind of life. The good son, then, must observe—*what? when? where, or how?* What? *work.* When? *to-day.* Where, or how? *in God's vineyard;* labouring in a lawful vocation lawfully.

The particular instances of the charge have been discussed; the general doctrine or sum is this: God hath given every one of us, besides our particular, a general calling of Christianity. The working in his vineyard is expounded by that chosen vessel: 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,' Phil. ii. 12. There is no action but hath his labour; and the proportion of it differs, and is made less or more according to the will of the agent. Whatsoever difficulty there is, ariseth rather from the doer than from the work. What we do willingly, seems easy. Some can follow their

dogs a whole day in the field with delight, upon whom, if authority should impose the measuring so many paces, how often would they complain of weariness ! Let good-fellows sit in a tavern from sun to sun, and they think the day very short, confessing (though insensible of the loss) that time is a light-heeled runner. Bind them to the church for two hours, and you put an ache into their bones, the seats be too hard : now time is held a cripple, and many a weary look is cast up to the glass. It is a man's mind that makes any work pleasant or troublesome.

The voluptuous man swaggers, bezzles, dances, riots ; and scornfully laughs at the sneaking earth-worm, that is ever carrying loads of earth to his hole, sweating and groaning under the burden ; and applauds his own wit for choosing such ease. The covetous, that is ever carking and vexing for the world, pitifully derides the voluptuous ; and judgeth his banquets too costly, his clothes too superfluous, his sports and revels too troublesome ; whiles himself hath only culled out the easy and happy living. Thus conceit can make difficult things facile, and light ponderous. The true Christian is all this while hearing the word, or praying, or meditating, or following his honest profession, (which both the former imagine burdensome,) and knows his life to be only blessed and comfortable ; accounting the covetous man's gain a loss, the voluptuous man's disport a punishment.

The way to heaven is one and the same, to all in itself alike ; though some make it to themselves more tedious by their own unwillingness. The same yoke more troubles the unyielding neck than the patient. *Dii laborantibus*, &c. We pay no price to God for any good thing but labour ; if we higgie in that, we are worthy to go without the bargain. A little loitering doth often no little hurt ; he that rows against a violent stream, by neglecting a stroke or two, is borne down a great way suddenly. Honest labour is a good companion, and beguiles the time, as society doth a tedious way. The wise man thinks those hours only go merrily down that are spent in doing good. But take we heed, that as our hands be not idle, so our works not vicious. The prophet speaks of some that are so far from slothfulness, that they 'imagine mischief on their beds, and rise up early to practise it,' Micah ii. 1. He that forbears idleness, and falls to lewdness, mends the matter as the unskilful chirurgeon did his patient's leg : when it was only out of joint, he broke it quite in pieces.

2. The charge is ended : the next point objected to our consideration is the son's answer, 'I will not.'

We have not been so long about the charge, but the son is as short in his answer : 'I will not.' A very strange speech of a son to a father : *Nolo*, 'I will not go.'

Here is no irresolute answer ; no halting between two opinions, as the Jews did in the days of Elijah, betwixt God and Baal. No lukewarmness, as Laodicea, Rev. iii. 15 ; which was neither hot nor cold, and therefore in danger to be spewed up, as an offence to God's stomach. He is none of those *neuters*, that walk to heaven with statute legs. None of those fools, that onwards their journey to heaven stand in a quandary whether they should go forward to God or backwards to the world. He is not a tottering Israelite, but a plain Jezreelite ; straining his voice to the highest note of obstinacy : *Nolo*, 'I will not go.'

He was no hypocrite : here is no dissembling carriage of the business ; as if his father would be pleased with good words, or that terms smotherer than Jacob could countenance rebellion rougher than Esau. He speaks his thought ; fall back, fall edge : 'I will not go.' He was not like that guest

whom the hermit turned out of doors after his charitable entertainment, because he perceived that he could warm his cold hands with the same breath wherewith he cooled his hot pottage.

‘Twas strange, he thought,
Both hot and cold could from one mouth be brought.’

This son’s breath was stone-cold ; as if no spark of piety, or ember of natural duty, lay on the hearth of his heart to warm it : *Nolo*, ‘I will not go.’

He was no Papist sure : for the Lovanian reservation, Jesuitical equivocation, or mental evasion, were not rules entered into his grammar. Those spurious, bastard, enigmatical positions,—abortive births, which are called *pæ fraudes*,—those smothered affirmations, and devilish cozenages, were not taught him ; he never saw the Jesuits’ College, nor heard Satan dispute in a friar’s cowl ; he is blunt and plain, and puts his father out of all doubt : *Nolo*, ‘I will not go.’

He was no lawyer, that is palpable : here be no demurs, nor pausing on an answer ; perhaps fearing a further solicitation, he goes roundly to work, and joins issue in a word : ‘I will not go.’

He was no talkative fellow : that to every short question returns answer able to fill a volume ; with as many parentheses in one sentence as would serve Lipsius all his life. I have read of two sorts of ill answers. Come to one of them, and ask where his master is : he replies, He is not within ; and goes his way, not a word further. Demand so much of another : he answers, My master is gone to the Exchange, to talk with a merchant of Turkey, about the return of a ship which went out in April, laden with, &c. ; a voluble, tedious, headless, endless discourse. This son is one of the former ; he doth not trouble his father with many words : he is short with him, as if he wanted breath, or were loath to draw out the thread of his speech too long : *Nolo*, ‘I will not go.’

He was no complimenter : he does not with a kissed hand, and cringing ham, practise his long-studied art of compliment ; and after a tedious antic of French courtesies, sets his tongue to a clinkant tune. No ; he deals peremptorily, proudly, impudently, desperately : *Nolo*, ‘I will not go.’

Excuses might have been quickly ready, if he would as willingly have lied as have disobeyed. He might have said with the sluggard, ‘There is a lion in the way, there is a bear without ;’ terror stands at the door : or, My head aches, I cannot work : or, The vineyard is in good case, and needs no dressing : or, It is too far thither ; as Jeroboam pleaded : or, I want skill to work in it : or, Thou hast servants enow, lay this task on them, and spare thy son : or, If thy son must do it, burden the younger with it ; I am thy eldest son, and privileged by primogeniture. No ; he hath no desire to shelter his disobedience under the boughs of excuses ; he had rather speak his mind freely : *Nolo*, ‘I will not go.’

Here is the picture of one thrusting away obedience with both hands, and renouncing goodness, as the Gergesenes did Christ, Matt. viii., when they thrust him out of their coasts ; as if they had told him that he was no guest for Gergesenes, for his severe laws and their secure lives could never cotton. Would you have some matches set by this son ? Stephen tells the Jews, Acts vii. 51, ‘Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.’ David speaks of some that ‘cast the laws of God behind their backs,’ Ps. l. 17 ; as a man throws a thing behind him in scorn, being an eyesore unto him. Job brings in the wicked saying to the Almighty,

'Depart from us, for we will none of thy ways,' chap. xxi. 14. Israel returns God's mild admonitions with 'There is no help ; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them I will go,' Jer. ii. 25 ; and, ver. 31, 'We are lords, we will no more come unto thee.' Here be matches and parallels to this son.

It is generally customable with us to justify ourselves, and rather than our ulcerous blains and putrefying sores should be exposed to sight and censure, we will double sin, and bind iniquity to iniquity, by concealing it. If there be any bush in Paradise, the sons of Adam have learnt of their father to shroud themselves under it. Either by covering it with a lie, as Gehazi to his master Elisha, 'Thy servant went no whither.' Or by colouring it with pretences, as Saul : Not I, but 'the people, saved,' not the worst, but 'the best of the cattle,' not for our own private uses, but 'for sacrifice to the Lord.' What a gradation of holy pretences is here assumed ! Or by translating it from ourselves, as Adam : Not I, but 'the woman ;' nay, 'the woman which *thou* gavest me ;' and so by rebound casting the fault on God. But here is rebellion unmasking herself, and shewing her ugly visage to the world with an immodest impudence ; a protestation, a prostitution of the heart to all manner of impiety : *Nolo*, 'I will not go.'

3. You hear his answer : let us examine whether we can find any better comfort in the event. 'But he repented and went.'

We say the second thoughts are most commonly the better. For all his big words, his stomach comes down. If I may take leave to gloss it, he could not want motives of humiliation to repentance, of excitation to obedience, if his recollected understanding did consider—(1.) The person commanding ; (2.) The charge ; (3.) Himself, the party charged.

(1.) *Pater est qui genuit, pavit, educavit.* It is his father, that bred him, that fed him ; and therefore, *jure paterno*, by the right of a father to his begotten child, might command him ; neither should his obedience be forced *formidine pœnæ*, as slaves execute their master's will for fear of the whip. But he is to be drawn *parentis amore*, with those soft and silken threads of inducement which love gently leads on.

(2.) The charge is not burdensome, nor unbecoming his worth, if he stood upon it. It is no base drudgery, as, Feed the ox, Hold the plough ; which no good son refuseth at his father's bidding. It was the fairest business his father could set him about—Work in the vineyard.

(3.) Himself, though a son, though the eldest son, must not live idle. There is nothing more tedious to a noble spirit than to do nothing. There is neither orb, nor star, nor mind, nor eye, nor joint that moveth not. This is not all : it inures his heart to obedience, as well as his hand to diligence ; it procures his father's blessing, inflames his affection ; and for a bountiful conclusion, shall possess him of his heritage. His father will give him the vineyard he wrought in.

Our Father in heaven gives every one of us the same charge. He sends us to his vineyard, his church, and bids us work there ; glorify his name, edify our brethren, and assure our own salvation. There is no precept in the whole book of God but enjoins this. Perhaps we have not so blasphemously answered with our tongues, *Nolumus*,—'We will not go,' we will not do it. But our lives have spoken it : and they make as loud a noise in his ears that hears the heart as easily as the lips. Our conversations speak it ; we actually deny it. I would to God our refusal were not too demonstrative. Oh, let us reclaim our impudent and refractory renegations, by a serious meditation of the former circumstances !

(1.) The commander is the Lord Almighty, that commands heaven, earth,

and hell ; and our benign and merciful Father. He must be obeyed, his will must be done : either *by* thee willingly, or constrainedly *upon* thee. There was never any Cain or Esau, Ahithophel or Jezebel, Julian or Judas, but did the will of God, though they went to hell for their labour. The signed will of God may be disobeyed, his eternal decrees cannot be crossed. What thou must do, do willingly. *Fata volentem ducunt, nolentem trahunt.* God gently leads thee coming, but drags thee on withdrawing : we say, a noble disposition *ducitur, non trahitur.* It is our Father's charge, let our obedience be cheerful. Let the wicked quake at his thunder, the sweet dews of his mercies mollify our hearts. It is for slaves to do nothing but for fear of present plagues, and the horror of future damnation ; but Paul persuades Christians 'by the mercy of God,' Rom. xii. 1. If that argument prevail not with us, we are unworthy the name of his sons. If the tender compassion of our loving Father, and the heart-blood of our elder Brother, Jesus Christ, cannot make our feet quake to enter forbidden paths, and our hands tremble when we put them forth to wicked actions, our souls are in a desperate case. Think, think, it is thy Father that commands.

(2.) The service required is easy, pleasant, comfortable. The devil imposeth on his slaves a heavy work, and a more heavy wages. His work is true drudgery (let not flesh and blood sit judges) : the vexation of covetousness, the misery of ambition, the sickness of ebriety, the poison of lust, the pining of malice, and the sting of conscience wrapt up in the honey of carnal delights, are baseness and most sordid slavery. His wages is worse : 'The wages of sin is death.' Such a death as the severing of the body from the soul, compared with the separation of the soul from God, is of a far vaster difference than the ache of a finger and the most horrid torments of the wheel. Well were it for his slaves if they might for ever go unpaid. But this work is sweet and delectable : hearing, reading, praying, singing, doing the works of piety, of pity ; can we imagine a fairer business, if at most it may be called a work ?

(3.) The reward is infinitely transcendent : when we have laboured in the vineyard, we shall have the vineyard. 'Work out your salvation,' and take your salvation. Those that have honoured God, God will honour. It is his mercy not to let any of our poor services to him go unregarded, unrewarded.

In this event, there is, first, a word of retraction ; secondly, a word of reversion ; thirdly, a word of proceeding. He was going on to hell roundly : this *but* interrupts him and stops his course. He begins in cool blood to pause and think upon it. His answer (and when he answered, his purpose) was, 'I will not go.' Yet here is a *but* that recollects him. After a little gathering up his spirits, and champing on this bit of the bridle that checked him, this *but*, he falls to be sorry for what he had spoken, and in direct terms to repentance. Lastly, when sorrow had well humbled him, and his wild spirits grew tame, he delays the time no longer, but falls instantly to his business : 'he went.' Faith taught him that his father was merciful, and would forgive his disobedient language, upon the true remorse of his conscience, especially when he came and found him 'working in the vineyard.'

But.—That which stops his lewd course is a serious consideration of his folly. This *veruntamen*, like an oar, turns the boat another way, and saves him from the rock, and inevitable shipwreck, whereinto he was running his vessel. It is a gasp that recovers his swooning soul, when there was little hope of life left. He had died if this *but*, like a little *aqua vite*, had not fetched him back.

It is a blessed wisdom of the soul, an antidote, or at least good physic for temerity, to consider our ways. He that goes on without a serious thought of a *quid feci* or *facturus sum*, precipitates his soul to ruin. The royal prophet so recalls and snibs himself: 'I thought on my ways: and turned my feet unto thy testimonies,' Pa. cxix. 59.

He repented.—They go far that never return. We heard this son at the highest stair of rebellion, now behold him descending by degrees: 'he repented and went;' and it may be supplied, 'he wrought.' Those that to man's judgment and help are inextricably wrapped in the devil's snares, the Lord can easily unwind and set at liberty: not seven devils in one, not a whole legion in another, not all the principalities and powers of darkness in a third, can hinder repentance of sin, and mercy to repentance, when God will bestow them. Kiss we the feet of his goodness, that can heal when the case is desperate: a woman bowed down with an infirmity eighteen years, Luke xiii.; a man thirty-and-eight years bedrid, John v. There is no heart so obdurate but the blood of Christ, when it shall please God to apply it, can mollify it.

Let this keep us from despairing of their salvation whom we see, for the present, given over to licentiousness. The prodigal returns home, the lost sheep is found, the dying thief is converted, this rebellious son is brought to repentance. Then, sin and spare not, says the libertine; there will be hope even to the last. But the mouth of this wickedness is soon stopped. *Qui semper dat poenitenti remissionem, non semper dat peccanti poenitentiam*,—Who always gives remission to him that repents, doth not evermore give repentance to him that sins. God hath promised forgiveness to him that converts; his oath hath confirmed this, and the blood of Christ hath sealed it. But *hoc opus, hic labor est*, how shalt thou be converted if God withhold his gracious Spirit? This promise binds thee to repentance as well as God to mercy. But where grows that herb of grace that thou mightest gather it? 'Convert thou me, O Lord, and I shall be converted.' The faults of the saints are therefore recorded; not to encourage our falling, but to comfort us when we are down. He that shall hearten himself to offend by their example, makes the same sin in him presumption which was in them infirmity. So, beholding a man falling by misfortune from some high bridge into a deep water, and yet scape drowning, go and precipitate thyself in, to scape after the same fashion! It is dangerous tempting of God's mercy.

He went.—Sorrow for the evil past was not sufficient; he must amend his future life. It is not enough to be sorry that he had loitered; he must now labour in the vineyard. It is often seen that the more perverse a sinner hath been, when he repents he proves the sounder. When this son grew to be good, he was good indeed. The prophet Jeremiah brings in Ephraim, saying, 'Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth,' chap. xxxi. 19. Paul had long been a loiterer, but when he began once to run in the right path, he overtook them all; and he that confessed himself 'born out of due time,' yet doth withal acknowledge that he was 'in labours more abundant than they all,' 1 Cor. xv. 8, 10. Mary Magdalene, being emptied of her seven devils, is testified by Christ 'to love much, because many sins were forgiven her,' Luke vii. 47. Zaccheus had long been a covetous extortioner, but when Christ and salvation came to his house, to his soul, how rich was his conversion! 'Behold, half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man, I restore him fourfold,' Luke xix. 8. As if he would

make haste to unravel that bottom of sin which he had been so long in winding up.

Thus I have shewed you a precedent of repentance ; shew me a sinner that follows it : one Sabbath-breaker that offers to redeem God's holy time he hath abusively lost ; one encloser that will throw open his unjustly taken-in commons ; one extortioner that returns his thefts,—his usuries, I should say, but sure I did not mistake. We say, We will not ; and indeed we do not. Repentance must not look in at our gates. We are not humbled to this day. God must lay us panting upon our bed of sickness, drink up our bloods, and raise our sins, like dust and smoke, in the eyes of our consciences, before we will be moved. Till then we bear our perjuries, blasphemies, oppressions, frauds, those unsupportable burdens, like cork and feathers upon our shoulders, without any sensible pressure. God touch our hearts, that we may 'repent, go and work in his vineyard !'

II. We have done with the dissolute, and are fallen now upon the hypocrite. But he hath been so liberally described in *The White Devil*, that I will only now present him, and let him go. This second son hath also his charge ; which because it is the same with the former, I lightly pass over. Only observe, that the Father commands every son to work. There must be no lazy ones in God's family. Adam, even in his innocence, Gen. ii. 15, was not permitted to sleep in the sweet bowers only, or to disport himself in the cool and pleasant walks, but he was bidden to dress the garden. But in the next chapter, when he had sinned, then labour was laid on him as a curse, chap. iii. 19. He and all his generations must earn their bread in the sweat of either brow or brain. There must be no ciphers in God's arithmetic,* no mutes in his grammar, no blanks in his calendar, no dumb shows on his stage, no false lights in his house, no loiterers in his vineyard.

The charge of the father requires also this son's answer : 'I go, sir.' He gives his father a fair title, *κύρις*, 'lord,' or 'sir,' as if he acknowledged to him most submissive reverence ; words soft as butter, but the deeds of war are in the heart. Many can give God good words, but *verba rebus proba*, saith the wise philosopher ; appeal from their lips to their lives. And you shall find these two differ, as it is seen in some taverns : there are good sentences upon the walls, Watch, Be sober, Fear God, &c., where there is nothing but blasphemy, ebriety, and unmeasurable rioting in the room. Our times have lighted on a strange flashing zeal in the tongue ; but it is a poor fire of zeal that will not make the pot of charity seethe. Our profession is hot, but our hospitality cold. These men are like a bad mill, that keeps a great clacking, but grinds no grist. 'What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction in thy heart?' Ps. l. 16. The hen, when she hath laid an egg, straight cackles it, which causeth it instantly to be taken from her. But here is one cackles when he has not laid, and God coming, finds his nest empty. This is to fry in words, freeze in deeds ; to speak by ells, and work by inches ; to promise mountains, and bring forth ridiculous mole-hills. A bad course and a bad discourse agree not. Words are but vocal interpreters of the mind, actions real ; what a man does we may be sure he thinks, not evermore what he says. Of the two, give me him that says little and doth much. Will you examine further who are like this son ? They that can say here in the temple, 'Lord, hallowed be thy name ;' scarce out of the church-doors, the first thing they do is to blaspheme it : that pray, 'Thy will be done,' when with all their powers they oppose it : and, 'Incline our hearts to keep thy laws,' when they utterly decline

* D. Boys : Postilla.

themselves. These are but devils in angels' feathers, stinking dunghills covered with white snow, rotten timber shining in the night; Pharisees' cups, *ignes fatui*, that seem to shine as fixed in the orb, yet are no other than crude substances and falling meteors. You hear how fairly this younger brother promiseth; what shall we find in the event? But 'he went not.'

What an excellent son had this been if his heart and tongue had been cut out of one piece! He comes on bravely, but, like an ill actor, he goes halting off. It is not profession, but obedience, that pleaseth God. 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven,' Matt. vii. 21. There are three things that cozen many, because they are preparatives to obedience, but are not it: Some intend well, as if the blast of a good meaning could blow them into heaven. Others prepare and set themselves in a towardness; but, like the George, booted and spurred, and on horseback, yet they stir not an inch. Others go a degree further, and they begin to think of a course for heaven: for a Sabbath or two you shall have them diligent churchmen; but the devil's in it, some vanity or other steals into their heart, and farewell devotion. All these are short, are nothing, may be worse than nothing; and it is only actual obedience that pleaseth God. Beloved, say no longer you will, but do; and the 'doer shall be blessed in his deed,' James i. 25. Which blessedness the mercies of God in Christ Jesus vouchsafe us! Amen.