

RIGHT REJOICING :
OR, THE
NATURE AND ORDER
OF
RATIONAL AND WARRANTABLE JOY ;
DISCOVERED IN A
SERMON PREACHED AT ST. PAUL'S
BEFORE THE
LORD MAYOR AND ALDERMEN,
AND THE SEVERAL COMPANIES OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

. On May 10th. 1660,

APPOINTED BY BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT TO BE A DAY OF SOLEMN
THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S RAISING UP AND SUCCEEDING HIS
EXCELLENCY, AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS,

IN ORDER TO

HIS MAJESTY'S RESTORATION,

AND THE SETTLEMENT OF THESE NATIONS.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE THOMAS ALLEYNE,

LORD MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LONDON,

WITH THE

RIGHT WORSHIPFUL ALDERMEN,

HIS BRETHREN.

As, in obedience to your favourable invitation, this Sermon was first preached; and the Author, conscious of his great unworthiness, employed in so honourable a work; so is it your pleasure, against which my judgment must not here contest, that hath thus exposed it to the public view; which yet I must confess doth not engage you in the patronage of any of the crudities and imperfections of this hasty work, it being the matter, which is of God, that so far prevailed for your acceptance as to procure your pardon of the manner, which is too much my own. Rejoicing is so highly valued, even by nature, that I thought it a matter of great necessity to help to rectify and elevate your joys. The corruption of a thing so excellent must needs be very bad; and it being the great and durable good that must feed all great and durable joy; and seeing these little transitory things can cause but little and transitory delight, I thought it my duty to insist most on the greatest on which, in your meditations, you must most insist; which I repent not of, especially now you have given my doctrine a more loud and lasting voice, because it is only our heavenly interest that may be the matter of universal continued delight: and so the subject may make the sermon to be of

the more universal and continued use, when a subject of less excellency and duration than heaven would have depressed and limited the discourse, as to its usefulness. And also I was forced in this, as in all these sublunary things, to estimate the mercy in which we did all so solemnly rejoice but as a means, which is so far to be valued as it conduceth to its end; and is something or nothing as it relateth to eternity. Since I placed my hopes above, and learned to live a life of faith, I never desire to know any mercy in any other form or name, nor value it on any other account, as not affecting to make such reckonings which I daily see obliterated in grief and shame by those that make them; and remembering who said, that if we had known Christ himself after the flesh, henceforth we know him so no more. As it was my compassion to the frantic merry world, and also to the self-troubling melancholy Christian, and my desire methodically to help you in your rejoicings about the great occasions of the day, which formed this exhortation to what you heard, and chose the subject which, to some, might seem less suitable to the day; so, if the publication may print so great and necessary a point on the hearts of any that had not the opportunity to hear, as God shall have the praise, and they the joy, so you shall have, under God, the thanks, and I the attainment of my end, which is my reward: I rest,

Your servant in the work of Christ,

RICHARD BAXTER.

RIGHT REJOICING.

LUKE x. 20.

Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.

Right Honourable, Worshipful, and Beloved Auditors,

IF any of you shall say, upon the hearing of my text, that I have chosen a subject unsuitable to the occasion, and that a "rejoice not" is out of season on a day of such rejoicing, they may, I hope, be well satisfied by that time they have considered the reason of these words, as used by Christ to his disciples, and the greater joy that is here commanded, and so the reason of my choice.

When Christ had sent forth his seventy disciples to preach the gospel through the cities of Judea, and to confirm it by miraculous cures, for which he endued them with power from above, upon their return they triumph especially in this, that "the devils themselves were subject to them through the name of Christ." (Ver. 17.) A mercy which Christ is so far from extenuating that, 1. He sets it forth more fully than they, (ver. 18,) "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." 2. He promised them yet more of it, "giving them power to tread on serpents, and on scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and that nothing should by any means hurt them." 3. He rejoiceth in spirit, and thankfully acknowledged it to the father himself. (Ver. 21.) And yet he seems here to forbid them to rejoice in it, commanding them another joy. What! was it not a mercy to be rejoiced in? Or is there any contradiction in the words of Christ? Neither: he doth not absolutely forbid them to rejoice in it; but he saw that their corruption took an advantage by it, to puff them up with pride and vain glory, and that they savoured it too carnally, and were much taken with it, as it was a visible triumph and honour to themselves the instruments; and too much overlooked the end and use of it. Christ

therefore aggravateth the mercy in its proper notion, as it was to the honouring of the father and himself, and the advancement of his kingdom, and the saving of men's souls, by the confirmation of the gospel, and the fall of Satan. But the shell or grosser substance of the mercy applied to a wrong end, and by corruption made another thing, being deprived of its proper soul, this Christ admonisheth them to keep out of their estimation and affection. He meeteth his returning messengers rejoicing too much in themselves: and this proud, inordinate, selfish joy is it that he would take from them by his caution or prohibition, "In this rejoice not." But that they may see that he doth not envy them their comforts, he sheweth them cause of a greater joy, which he alloweth and commandeth them, as more suitable to his ends and their felicity: "But rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

For better understanding of this you may observe; 1. What matter of joy the subjection of the devils might afford them. 2. What manner of joy they were affected with, which Christ forbade them. 3. What manner of joy it is that Christ alloweth them, when he seemeth to restrain it wholly to their heavenly interest.

1. No doubt, to have the devils subject to them was a great mercy, in which they might rejoice. For, 1. It was the gift of Christ: and all is perfumed that hath touched his hand. Nothing but good can come from him that is so good, by way of gift.

2. It was a gift foretold by the prophets, as reserved for the gospel time, that is eminently called the kingdom of God: and an extraordinary gift in respect to the precedent and subsequent generations. It was no usual thing for men to exercise such authority over the very devils, as to command them to come forth, and to heal the bodies that they had long afflicted.

3. It was a victory over the strongest enemy, that can make more effectual resistance than the most numerous armies of poor mortals, and would laugh at your horse and arms, your fire and sword, your greatest cannons: and cannot be expugned but by the power of the Almighty. A stronger than he must come upon him, and bind him, and cast him out of his possession, before he will surrender the garrison, goods, and prisoners, which he hath held in peace, (Luke xi. 31, 22.)

4. It was a victory over the most subtle enemy, that is not conquerable by any stratagems of human wit.

5. It was a victory over the most malicious enemy, that

sought more than the subversion of men's temporal peace, and by afflicting the body intended the hurting of the soul.

6. It was a conquest of him that had long possession, and one way or other kept in bondage the prisoners that justice had subjected to his rage.

7. It was a victory exceeding honourable to Christ, whose very messengers, by his name alone, could make the powers of hell submit. He that refused to be made a king, as having not a kingdom of this world, (John xviii. 36,) and that had not a place to lay his head on; (Matt. viii. 22;) commanded him that had presumed to tempt him with all the kingdoms and the glory of the world! (Matt. iv. 8, 9;) and that not only by the bare word of his mouth, but by the word of his meanest, most despised messengers; which made the people stand amazed, saying, what manner of man is this?

8. It was a victory tending to the successes of the gospel, to convince the unbelieving world, and so to enlarge the kingdom of Christ, and to save the people's souls.

9. And also from so great a work it was no small honour that accrued to the instruments: an honour which, in its proper place, they might lawfully regard.

10. And all this was aggravated by the congruency of the mercy to the low, despised condition of the instruments, (and of Christ himself,) when they were destitute of all common advantages and means, for the carrying on of so great and necessary a work, surpassing all the strength of flesh: how seasonable was it that the Omnipotency of heaven should then appear for them, and thus engage itself for their success. So that in all this you may easily see that here was abundant matter for a rational, warrantable joy to the disciples.

II. But where then was their fault? And what was that joy which Christ forbade them? *Answer.* Having already told you in general, I shall tell you more particularly. 1. They looked too much at the matter of dominion over the subjected and ejected devils and relished most delightfully the external part. As the Jews looked for a Messiah that should come in grandeur, and bring the nations under his dominion; so the disciples that had yet too much of these conceits began to be lifted up with the expectation of some earthly glory, when they saw the powers of hell submit, and Christ thus begin with the manifestation of his omnipotency. But the great end of these miracles they too much overlooked: they too much left out of the rejoicings the

appearances of God, the advantages of faith, the promotion of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and the greater mercies of the gospel, as to themselves and others.

2. They took too great a share of the honour to themselves, being more affected to see what great things they were made the instruments to accomplish, than what honour did thereby accrue to God and benefit to man; and thus, while they arrogate too much to themselves, and withal too much overlook those higher, greater mercies, to which all their miracles were but means, they deservedly fall under Christ's reproof; and he is employed in the cure of their diseased joys, by amputation of the superfluities, and rectifying the irregularities, and supplying the defects, lest Satan should take possession of their souls, by carnality, selfishness, and pride, when they thought they had conquered him, by dispossessing him of men's bodies.

III. By this you may understand what joy it is that Christ alloweth and commandeth them.

1. As to themselves, to kill their pride, and to increase their kindly joy and thankfulness, and to advance their estimation of the riches of the gospel, and rectify their judgment of the work and kingdom of their Lord, he calls them to mind that higher mercy, which is worthy of their greatest joy. An interest in heaven is another kind of mercy than healing the sick, or casting out devils here on earth.

2. In reference to his honour, he would have them first look at the greatest of his gifts, and not forget the glory which he finally intends them, while they are taken up with these wonders in the way; for his greatest honour ariseth from his greatest mercies.

3. As to the degrees of their rejoicing, he would not have them give the greater share to the lesser mercy, but to rejoice so much more in their heavenly interest, as that all other joy should be as none in comparison of it: so that this "Rejoice not in this," &c. is as much as if he had said, 'Let your rejoicing in this power over the devils be as nothing in comparison of your rejoicing that your names are written in heaven.' Just as he forbiddeth care and labour for these earthly things, when he saith, "Care not what ye shall eat," &c.; (Matt. vi. 25;) "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you." (John vi. 27.) Our care and labour for earthly things must be nothing, in comparison of the care and labour we are at for hea-

ven : and so our joy, in the greatest of these outward mercies, should be as nothing, in comparison of our joy in higher things.

4. As to the nature and order of the thing, he alloweth them no joy in this, or any temporal or created thing whatsoever, but as it proceedeth from God, and tendeth to him as our ultimate end. We must not rejoice in our victories over Satan, or any other enemy, for itself, and as our end, but as it is a means to the glory of God and men's salvation. In all which, it is evident that Christ doth but regulate and advance their joy, and calleth them first to rejoice in that which is their end and all, and animateth all their lower mercies; he then alloweth and requireth them to rejoice, even in this, which he seemed to forbid them to rejoice in, viz., that the devils were subject to them, so they do it in due subordination to its end.

The only difficulty in the preceptive part of the text is, what is meant here by the "Writing of their names in heaven." In a word, the meaning is, that they are "fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God;" and having a room among the saints on earth, have a title to the celestial glory. As in some well-ordered cities there were rolls kept of the names of all the citizens, or freemen, as distinct from all the inferior, more servile, sort of subjects; and as muster-rolls are kept of the listed soldiers of the army, so all that are saints are enrolled citizens of heaven, that is, are the heirs of the heavenly felicity.

We are decreed to this state before the foundations of the world; we are redeemed to it by the death of Christ; but we are not actually entered into it till we are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and heartily engaged to God the Father, Son, and Spirit, in the holy covenant.

The doctrine of the text is contained in this proposition—To have our names written in heaven is the greatest mercy, and first, and chiefly, and only for itself to be rejoiced in; which so puts the estimate on all inferior mercies, that further than they refer to this they are not to be the matter of our joy.

Though we had seen the devils subjected to our ministration, departing from the possessed when we command them in the name of Christ, and the bodies of the afflicted miraculously relieved; yet all this were not, comparatively, to be rejoiced in, not as separated from our title to the heavenly glory.

When I have, first, given you the reasons of the prohibition—"Rejoice not in this," and then of the command—"But re-

ther rejoice," &c. you may, by fuller satisfaction about the sense and truth of the proposition, be better prepared for the further application.

I. "Rejoice not," though the devils themselves were subject to you, further than as this refers to heaven; 1. Because all these common mercies may possibly consist with the present misery of the persons that receive them. A man may be the slave of the devil, as to his soul, when he is casting him out of another man's body. He may be conquered by his own concupiscence, that hath triumphed over many an enemy. These times have showed it, to our grief, that heresy, and pride, and ambition, and self-conceit, may conquer those that have been famous for their conquests. He may be a slave to himself that is the master of another.

And what I say of the instance in my text, you may, upon a parity or superiority of reason, all along give me leave to apply to the great occasion of the day, it being a matter of much greater glory to conquer infernal powers than mortal enemies, and to have the devils subject to us than men. To be such a conqueror of men or devils is no sure proof of the pardon of sin, the favour of God, and saving of your souls. Alas! how many, called valiant, are the basest cowards in the warfare that their everlasting life dependeth on? How many that are renowned for their victories by men, are wretches despised and abhorred by the Lord? What Christian so poor and despicable in the world that would change his state with a Catiline or Sejanus, yea, with a Cæsar or Alexander, if he might? Could you see the inside of a glittering gallant, or an adored prince, that is a stranger to the life of faith, what a sad disparity would you see? The vermin of the most filthy lusts continually crawling in the soul, while the body is set out by the most exquisite ornaments that pride can invent, and their purses can procure, for the increasing of their esteem in the eyes of such as judge of souls by the colour and cover of the bodies. To see the same man sumptuously feasted, attended, honoured, magnified by men, and at the same time dead in sin, unacquainted with the life and comforts of believers, and under the curse and condemnation of the law of God, would tell you that such a wretch is far from the state in which a reasonable man is allowed to rejoice. There are not more naked leprous souls in the world, than some that are covered with a silken, laced, painted case: nor any more poor and sordid, than such as

abound with earthly riches. And for such a one to rejoice is as unseemly as for a man to glory that his gangrened foot hath a handsome shoe ; or that his diseased, pained flesh doth suffer in the fashion ; or that his wounds and ulcers are searched with a silver instrument. God seeth the rottenness and filth that is within these painted sepulchres, and therefore judgeth not of them as the ignorant spectator, that seeth no further than the smoothed, polished, gilded outside. And therefore we find his language of such to differ so much from the language of the world. He calls those poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and foolish, and mad, and dead, and cursed, that perhaps hear nothing lower from the world than honourable, worshipful, rich, and wise ; and men are admiring them, while God is loathing them : and men are applauding them, while God condemneth them. And hence it is that the servants of the Lord do lament the case of those that worldlings count most happy. What Paul speaks of those “ whose God is their belly, whose glory is their shame, and who mind earthly things,” he doth it weeping ; (Phil. iii. 18, 19 ;) when a frantic sensualist would have derided his compassionate tears, and bid him keep them for himself.

2. Rejoice not in these outward common things comparatively, or for themselves, because they are not only consistent with most deplorable misery, but also are the strong and ordinary means of making men miserable, and fixing them in it, and increasing it. Many that have seemed humble, fruitful, flourishing, and steadfast, while they dwelt in the vallies of a mean, a low, afflicted state, have proved sun-burnt, weather-beaten sinners, apostates, proud, vain glorious and barren, when they have removed their habitations to the mountains of prosperity. Alas ! we find it hard enough to be serious, faithful Christians, under the less and ordinary temptations of a poor, or mean, or suffering condition. And I should rejoice if I were but to pass to heaven as a camel must pass through a needle's eye. We have difficulties enough already, unless our wisdom, strength, and courage, were greater to encounter them ; and shall we rejoice if these difficulties be increased to impossibilities, (as with men,) leaving us no hope but that human impossibilities are conquerable by Divine Omnipotency. (Luke xviii. 27.) Is it not hard enough to have a lowly mind in a low condition ; but much more in a high. To despise the world when the world despiseth us. To walk in heaven when faith is not interrupted by the noise or shows of the distracted actors

of these bedlam tragedies. And to converse with our everlasting company, when we are freest from these crowds and tumults. And shall we rejoice that we, who already stumble at straw, have rocks of offence and mountains of difficulty cast before us? How few are advanced to higher measures of faith and holiness by their advancements in the world? For the most part, if they seemed to have something of plain honesty and fidelity before, when they come to be advanced, it is drowned in carnal policies, self-love, and hypocritical dissimulation. And if they seemed before to be humble and heavenly, and to live to God, and to his interest and service, how strangely doth prosperity and dignity transform them, and make them forget their former apprehensions, their convictions, purposes, and vows, yea, their God, their happiness, and themselves. And should we not be very cautelous how we rejoice in an air that few men have their health in? and in a diet how sweet soever, that corrupts and kills the most that use it? in the tables that prove snares, and the sumptuous houses that are traps to the inhabitants?

3. Rejoice not in these common things, for they are but such as are often made the devil's tools to do his work by, and are used against the Lord that gave them, to the hinderance of the gospel, and injury of the church of Christ. While men are low, and live by faith, they do good with the little which they have; and have the blessing of the will, (when they are unable for the deed,) and of hearts disposed to do good if they had opportunity; when usually those that are lifted up, having more of power, and less of will, do less when they might and should do more; and use their talents to aggravate their sin and condemnation; to further piety, or charity, they have power without will; but to hinder it, they have both power and will. And while the poor of the world, that are rich only in faith, would help on the work of God, and cannot, (by the great assistances which the great might give,) and the rich and honourable can and will not, but can and will promote the interest of the flesh, you may easily see the case of the church, how sure it is to know the adversity, and how much of our expectation must be from God, and how little from any of the sons of men. Is it as common for one that is very rich to part with all to follow Christ for the hopes of heaven, as it is for one that hath not much in the world, to part with? Is it as common for one that hath many thousands a year, to cast all his substance into the treasury, as for a widow to do it that hath but two mites? (Luke xxi. 2.)

4. O how much easier were it like to go with the church of God if greatness and ungodliness were not so commonly con-junct ! But usually, as riches, and dignities, and honours, do much increase their carnal interest, so do they increase their carnal mindedness, and their engagements against that life of faith and holiness which is contrary to their interests ; so that none are such malignant adversaries to godliness, and none have such advantage to execute their malice. Seeing, then, that all such honours and advancements are made by corruption too ordinary instruments of the vilest works of serving Satan, and opposing Christ, and oppressing piety, honesty, and innocence, rejoice not in them as for themselves, nor any way but in subservience to your heavenly rejoicings.

5. And it should much abate our carnal joy to consider that all these things are such as may end in misery, and leave the owner in everlasting wo. He that is feasting in purple and fine linen to-day, may be to-morrow in remediless torments, and want a drop of water to cool his tongue. (Luke xvi.) He that is to-day triumphing over mortal enemies, may to-morrow be led in triumph to hell fire, and lie in chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day. He that is now prophesying in the name of Christ, and casting out devils, and doing many great and wonderful works, may shortly be condemned at his bar with a "depart from me ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you." (Matt. vii. 22, 23.) And who would be merry at a feast that he must cast up again, in griping pain, or mortal sickness ? You see now where the great ones of the world do take their places, and how they are admired and honoured by men ; but you see not where the tide will leave them, and how they shall be used by infernal spirits, if they have not a better preventive and security than all the renown and dignities of the world. Be cautelous, therefore, in your rejoicing for that which may end in everlasting sorrows.

Yea, more than so, these outward honours and successes may plunge men deeper in perdition than ever they had been without them. And thousands shall wish that they had never known them ; and that they had rather been the lowest and obscurest persons, than by the temptations of prosperity to have been led into that misery. And should you not be very cautelous in your rejoicing in that which you may possibly wish you had never known ? You see then the reasons for the prohibition, "Rejoice not."

II. But, on the contrary, that the precept "Rejoice that your

names are written in heaven," is backed with such reasons from the nature of the thing, as should much excite us to the practice, is a truth so manifest, that a tedious demonstration of it might seem at best unnecessary, and so an error, in these straits of time. 1. What should be rejoiced in, if not the Lord of life himself, who is the everlasting joy and glory of the saints? If felicity itself cannot make us happy, and life itself is insufficient to quicken us, and the sun itself cannot illuminate us, it is in vain to expect this light, this life, this happiness and joy from any other. From others we may have joy derivatively at the second hand, but only from God as the original and first cause. Other things may be means of the conveyance, but God is the matter of our joy. A creature may be his medicine, but he is our life and health itself, Comfort may be offered by others, but it is he that gives it. Others may direct us to it, but he effecteth it. If God be not to be rejoiced in, the affection of joy is made in vain; for he is goodness itself, and there is nothing lovely or delectable but what is in him. And what is heaven but the fruition of God?

2. It is congruous that we now rejoice in that which we must everlastingly rejoice in. Heaven is the state of everlasting joy, and, therefore, the foresight of it by faith is the only way to rational, solid comfort here. If you knew the place in which you should live but an hundred years in earthly pleasures, or the friend in whom you should as long have sweet delight, the foreknowledge of it would make that place and friend more delightful to you than any other. Mutable joys are the shame of man, and show his levity, or his folly in choosing these things to comfort him that are insufficient to perform it. But if your heavenly interest be the matter of your joy, you may rejoice to-morrow as well as to-day, and the next day as well as to-morrow, and the next year as well as this. If prosperity be your joy, your joy must be short, for your worldly prosperity will be so. If victory and dignity, and overtopping others, be your joy, it will be short; for death is ready to leave the conqueror, the honourable, the prince, with the conquered, and the meanest subject. If the solemnity and feasting of such a day as this should be the greatest matter of your joy, the day will have a night, and the feast an end, and so will your joy. But if heaven be the matter of your joy, you may go on in your rejoicing, and every day may be your festival: for God is the same both yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. You only have

the day that hath no night, and the feast that hath no end, or intermission, unless as it is caused by your errors and misapprehensions. There can nothing fall out of so hurtful a nature as to turn your feast into gall and wormwood, for God will be still God, and Christ still your head, and heaven will be heaven, and nothing is of any considerable moment to put into the scales against your happiness. If once you have a God, a Christ, a heaven to rejoice in, you may rationally indulge a constant joy, and may rationally rejoice in poverty, reproach, contempt, and calumny, in imprisonment, banishment, sickness, or in death, as in a prosperous state : and you transgress the laws of reason if you do not.

3. Rejoice if your names are written in heaven ; for this is a divine, a pure, a profitable, and a warrantable joy. When God and his ministers rebuke your mirth, it is not this holy mirth that they rebuke, but your dreaming mirth, or waking folly. As we beat down your presumption, but to set up your faith ; and beat down men's deceitful hopes, to prepare them for the hopes that will not fail them, and not to bring them to despair ; so do we call you from your frothy, foolish, childish mirth, that we may lead you to the highest joys. Here is joy that you need not be ashamed of ; of which you can scarcely take too much ; of which you need not to repent. Be as joyful and merry as you will, if this may but be the matter of your joy. The more you are thus joyful, the more acceptable to God. It is Satan, and not God, that is the enemy of this joy ; that pleads against it, and fills a Christian's mind with groundless scruples, and doubts, and objections against it. O that our souls and our assemblies did more abound with this holy joy ! And O that Christians understood the excellency and usefulness of it, and would set themselves more constantly to the promoting and maintaining of it in themselves ! Whoever of you that is most joyful in the Lord, I dare persuade you to be more joyful yet ; and so far should you be from checking yourselves for this holy joy, that the rest of your duties should intend it, and you should make it your work by the help of all God's ordinances and mercies to increase it. He is the best Christian that hath most love, and joy, and gratitude ; and he that is best at this, is like to be best in the performance of his other duties, and in the conquest of remaining sins. But more of this in the application.

And now I am approaching to a closer application, I hope I may suppose that I have removed the objection that met me in

the beginning, and that by this time you see that I am not unseasonably suppressing your warrantable joy ; but, 1. Preventing that which is unwarrantable ; and, 2. Showing you the higher joys, which must animate these, or they will be but dead, corrupted things ; it is only the regulation and the exaltation of your joys that I am endeavouring : and, for the first, my text affordeth me so full instruction, that you may see this observation meeting you in the first perusal of the words.

That when the Lord hath vouchsafed us matter of rejoicing in his wonders of mercy, and our great successes, the best of us are too prone to take up a selfish, carnal joy, and have need of Christ's prohibition or caution, "rejoice not in this."

The soul is active, and will be doing ; and there is nothing that it is more naturally inclined to than delight. Something or other, which may be suitable to it, and sufficient to answer its desires, it fain would be rejoicing in. And the spiritual part of all our mercies is pure and refined, and too subtle for the discerning of our carnal minds, and, therefore, is invisible to the dark, ungodly world ; and, also, it is contrary to the interest of the flesh, and to the present bent of man's concupiscence : and therefore it is that spiritual mercies are not perceived, nor relished by the flesh ; yea, that they are refused, as food by a sick stomach, with enmity and loathing, as if they were judgments or plagues, and not mercies ; and hence it is that a carnal mind doth as unwillingly accept of any mercies of this sort, as if it were some heavy service that made God almost beholden to him to accept them. But the objects of sense, the matters of commodity, or honour, or sensual pleasure, are such as the worst of men are more eager after than any other ; they are things that flesh itself doth savour, and can judge of, and is naturally, now, too much in love with. And, therefore, there being too much of this concupiscence yet within us, the best have need, as to be excited to the spiritual part of their rejoicing, so to be warned and called off from the carnal part. Our successes, and our other common mercies, have all of them both a carnal and a spiritual part ; somewhat that is suited to our bodies, and somewhat to our souls. And as we are all too prone to be sensible and regardful of our bodily affairs and interests, and too insensible and neglectful of the matters of our souls ; so we can easily pick out so much of providences and mercies as gratify and accomodate our flesh ; and there we would stop and know no more ; as if we had no spiritual part to

mind, nor the mercy of any spiritual part to be improved. To rejoice in mere prosperity and success may be done without grace, by pride, and sensuality, as easily as a drunkard can be merry with his cups, or any other sinner in his sin. Think it not needless, then, to hear this admonition, take heed that you rejoice not carnally in the carcass, or outside only of your mercies; as such an outside religion, consisting in the shell of duty, without God, who is the life and kernel, is not religion indeed, but an hypocritical, self-deceiving show; so you may turn a day of thanksgiving into a day of fleshly mirth, more sinful than a morris-dance or may-game, because of the aggravation of conjunct hypocrisy, if you set not a faithful guard upon your hearts.

For the rectifying, therefore, and elevating of your joys, I am first to tell you, that there is matter of far greater joy before you than all the successes or prosperity of the world: and if it be not, yet being freely offered you, your acceptance may quickly make it such. Eternal joy and glory is at hand, the door is open, the promise is sure, the way made plain, the helps are many, and safe, and powerful; you may have the conduct of Christ, and the company of thousands, (though the smaller number,) if you will go this way: there are passengers every day going on, and entering in; many that were here the last year, are this year in heaven; yea, many that were yesterday on earth, are in heaven to day. It is another kind of assembly and solemnity than this that they are now beholding, and you may behold. One strain of that celestial melody doth afford more ravishing sweetness and delight than all that ever earth could yield. If a day in God's courts here, be better than a thousand in common employments or delights, then, sure, a day in heaven is better than ten thousand. That is the court; and (except the church, which is a garden that hath some celestial plants, and is a seminary or nursery for heaven) this world is the dung-hill. There all is spiritual, pure, and perfect; the soul, the service, and the joy; but here they are all so mixed with flesh, and, therefore, so imperfect and impure, that we are afraid of our very comforts, and are fain, upon the review, to sorrow over many of our joys. We come now from cares and troubles to our feasts; and our wedding garments smell of the smoke; and a secret disquietness in the midst of our delights doth tell us, that the root of our troubles doth remain, and that yet we are not where we should be, and that this is not our resting place.

We lay by our cares and sorrows on these days with our old clothes, to take them up again to morrow, and alas ! they are our ordinary week-day habits : and it were well if it were only so ; but even in laughter the heart is sorrowful ; and in our sweetest joys we feel such imperfections as threateneth a relapse into our former troubles. But the face of God admitteth no such imperfections in the joy of the beholders ; there we shall have joy without either feeling or fear of sorrow ; and praises without any mixtures of complaint. Our sweetest love to the Lord of love will feel no bounds, and fear no end. O what unspeakable delights will fill that soul that now walks mournfully, and feedeth upon complaints and tears ! How the glory of God will make that face to shine for ever, that now looks too dejectedly, and is darkened with griefs, and worn with fears, and daily wears a mourning visage ! No trouble can enter into the heavenly Jerusalem : nor is there a mournful countenance in the presence of our King ! Self-troubling was the fruit of sin and weakness, of ignorance, mistakes, and passion, and, therefore, is unknown in heaven, being pardoned and laid by with our flesh among the rest of our childish weaknesses and diseases. That poor, afflicted, wounded soul, that breathes in trouble as its daily air, and thinks it is made up of grief and fear, shall be turned into love and joy, and be unspeakably higher in those heavenly delights than ever it was low in sorrow. O blessed face of the most glorious God ! O happy presence of our glorified head ! O blessed beams of the eternal love, that will continually shine upon us ! O blessed work ! to behold, to love, to delight, and praise ! O blessed company of holy angels, and perfect saints, so perfectly united, so exactly suited, to concord in those felicitating works ! Where all these are what sorrow can there be ? what relics of distress, or smallest scars of our ancient wounds ! Had I but one such friend as the meanest angel in heaven to converse with, how easily could I spare the courts of princes, the popular concourse, the learned academies, and all that the world accounteth pleasure, to live in the sweet and secret converse of such a friend ! How delightfully should I hear him discourse of the ravishing love of God, of the glory of his face, the person of our Redeemer, the continued union of the glorified human nature with the divine, and of the head, with all the glorified members, and his influences on his imperfect ones below ! Of the dignity, quality, and work of saints and angels, and of the manner of their mutual con-

verse. How gladly would I retire from the noise of laughter, the compliments of comic gallants, the clutter and vain-glory of a distracted world, or any of the more mainly inferior delights, to walk with one such heavenly companion ! O how the beams of his illuminated intellect would promote my desired illumination ! And the flames of his love to the most glorious God would reach my heart ; what life and heavenly sweetness there would be in all his speeches ! That little of heaven that I have perceived on some of the servants of the Lord, that are conversant above in the life of faith, doth make them more amiable, and their converse much more delectable to me, than all the feasting, music, or merriments in the world. O then what a world of joy and glory will that be, where we shall not only converse with them that have seen the Lord, and are perfected in the beatifical vision and fruition, but also shall ourselves everlastingly behold him, and enjoy him in perfection ! That world all true believers see ; they see it by faith in the holy glass which the Spirit in the apostles and prophets hath set up : and they have the earnest and first-fruits of it themselves, even that Spirit by which they are sealed hereunto ; that world we are ready to take possession of ; we are almost there ; we are but taking our leave of the inhabitants and affairs of earth, and better putting on our heavenly robes, and we are presently there. A few nights more to stay on earth, a few words more to speak to the sons of men, a few more duties to perform, and a few more troublesome steps to pass, will be a small inconsiderable delay. This room will hold you now but an hour longer, and this world but a few hours more, but heaven will be the dwelling-place of saints to all eternity. These faces of flesh that we see to day, we shall see but a few times more, if any ; but the face of God we shall see for ever. That glory no dismal times shall darken, that joy no sorrow shall interrupt, no sin shall forfeit, no enemy shall endanger or take from us, no changes shall ever dispossess us of. And should not a believer then rejoice that his name is written in heaven ? and that every providence wheels him on, and whether the way be fair or foul it is thither that he is travelling ? O sirs ! if heaven be better than vanity and vexation ; if endless joy be better than the laughter of a child that ends in crying ; and if God be better than a delusory world, you have then greater matters set before you to be the matter of your joy than prosperity and success, or any thing that flesh and blood delights in.

And this being so, I am next, in faithfulness to your souls, obliged to call you to inquire, whether the rejoicing of this day, and the rejoicing of your lives, do here begin ? Is God the beginning and the end of all ? O that the Lord would awaken you to perceive, in all your mirth, how nearly it concerneth you to know first whether your names are written in heaven ; and whether your chiefest joy be fetched from thence.

Alas ! sirs, it is a most pitiful sight to see men frisk about in jollity, with the marks of death and wrath upon them ; and to see men so frantically merry in their sin, as to forget the misery that will so quickly mar their mirth ; and to see men live as quietly and pleasantly as if all were well with them, when they have taken no successful care for their precious souls, nor made any considerable sure provision for their endless life ! Poor sinner ! the Lord who sent me on this message to thee, knows that I envy thee not thy mirth or pleasure, but only would have it better for thee, or have thee set thy mind on better. But let me so far interrupt thee in thy mirth, as to ask thee whether thou art sure of heaven ? Or, at least, whether thou hast given diligence to make it sure ? (2 Peter i. 10.) If this night thy soul be called away, canst thou truly say that thou art an heir of life, and hast laid up thy treasure there beforehand ? If thou say that thou hopest well, and no man can do more, and thus dost desperately cast thy everlasting life upon a careless venture, I must tell thee first that assurance may be bad. Would God bid us rejoice that our names are written in heaven, if it were a thing that could not by any means be known ? Would he bid us give diligence to make our calling and election sure, if it were a thing that could not by any diligence be attained ? And I must add, that presumption is no sign of a safe condition. It shall not go well with you because you imagine it shall go well. A man in a dropsy or consumption will not live by saying that he hopes he shall not die. Yea, more, I must add, that a careless venturousness is a mark of misery. For a man that valueth God and his salvation, cannot put off a matter of such eternal consequence so slightly and disregardfully. And a fear and care about your salvation would be a far better sign. For the most part they are safest that fear their danger, and they are in the saddest case that are never sad at the consideration of their case. It is not your bold and confident conceits that will open heaven to you, and therefore, I beseech you, presently look out for surer grounds of peace than these.

If you say, How can it be known to me whether my name be written in heaven or not? I shall briefly, but satisfactorily, answer it.

In general, if thou know that thou art one that God hath promised heaven to, thou mayest know thy title, which is meant by the writing of thy name in heaven, and thou mayest know that this promise shall be made good.

More particularly, 1. If thou hast had such an effectual sight of the vanity of earth, and of the heavenly felicity, that heaven hath the pre-eminence in thy practical estimation and choice, and thou hast resolved that heaven or nothing shall be thy happiness, and art so far at a point with all things under the sun, as that thou art resolved to stick closer to Christ than unto them, and whatever it cost thee to take the fruition of God for ever as thy portion; if, upon consideration of the difference between heaven and earth, God and the creatures, eternity and time, thou hast heartily devoted thyself to God, and art willing to be his servant upon the terms that he inviteth thee on, thou mayest be assured that thy name is written in heaven. (Matt. vi. 19, 21, and xvi. 24—26, and xiii. 45, 46; Luke xviii. 33.)

But if earth be the place of thy highest estimation and choice, where thou placest thy chief affections, and which thou adherest to more resolutely than to God, and which thou wilt not leave whatever thou lose by it, then, as earth hath thy heart, so earth is thy treasure, and thy name is not written in heaven, but in the dust.

2. If the obtaining of heaven be the principal part of thy care and business, the principal work which thou mindest in the work, it is certain that thy name is written in heaven: (Col. iii. 1—4:) otherwise not.

3. If, finding thyself lost and filthy in thy sin, thou see the necessity and sufficiency of Christ, and, being desirous of his grace and righteousness, dost unfeignedly take him for thy Saviour and Lord, and give up thyself to be healed, and justified, and saved by him, as the only physician of souls, thou art then his member, and thy name is written in heaven. (Job. i. 12, and iii. 16, 18.)

4. If the heavenly nature be most amiable in thine eyes, and the heavenly life be it that thou most desirest; if thou hadst rather be holy than be unholy, and hadst rather perfectly obey the Lord, than live in sin, and longest to be better, and

studiest to live in obedience to the Lord, thy name is in heaven, and thither thou art passing, and it will be thy reward. But if thou love not holiness, but hadst rather be excused from it, and live in thy sins, thou art as yet no heir of heaven. (Job iii. 19; and xii. 26; Psalm i. and cxix.)

5. If thy name be written in heaven, thou hast a special love to the heirs of heaven. And the more of heaven thou findest in their hearts and lives, the more amiable they are unto thee, and the sweeter is their converse. (Job iii. 14; Psalm xv. 4.)

I shall name no more. These evidences are sure. By these you may know, while you sit here in these seats, yea, if you lay in the darkest dungeon, that you are the heirs of heaven, and your names are there.

But where there is no such work, no high estimation of heaven, and resolution for it, no mortification or conquest of the world, no prevalent care and diligence for heaven, no resignation of the soul to Christ, that by faith and holiness we might follow him to that glory, no love to holiness, and no delight in the heirs of heaven, such persons are yet aliens to the heavenly nature and inheritance, and cannot rejoice that their names are written in heaven.

And now I have set the glass before you, I earnestly entreat you that you will here seriously view the complexion of your souls. It more nearly concerneth you to know whether your names are written in heaven, and where it is that you must dwell for ever, than to know how to manage your trades and business, or to know whether you shall stir from this place alive, or ever see another day. 'O sirs, take heed of living in self-deceit till your trying and recovering time is past! This is it that your enemy aims at; he will do all that malice and subtlety can do to keep such matters from your sober thoughts, or to make you groundlessly presume that you are safe, or securely to cast your souls upon a desperate venture, under pretence of trusting in Christ, till he hath you where he would have you, and then he will himself take off the veil, and let you know that you had time and light to have acquainted you with your disease and misery, while you might have had a free, and sure, and full remedy. Then you shall know that it was along of your self-deceit if you would not understand and believe in time, that if you lived after the flesh, you should die, (Rom. viii. 13,) and that it is the pure in heart that shall see God. (Matt. v. 8.) Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not

inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience. (Ephes. v. 5, 6.) And can any thing justify the rejoicing of men in so sad a state?

Give me leave, therefore, to make a little closer application of the several parts of my text to the several sorts of persons whom they do concern. And first to all that yet are not become the heirs of 'heaven: Rejoice not though devils were subject to you, till your souls are subject to him that bought them. Rejoice not though you had conquered all the world, and had your wills of all your adversaries, as long as you are conquered by your fleshly lusts, and Satan leads you captive at his will. (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.) Rejoice not though you had all the riches of the earth, as long as you are void of the riches of grace, and have nothing to do with the riches of glory. Rejoice not though all men should honour you, and bow to you, and proclaim your fame, as long as you are the drudges of the devil and the flesh, and the God of heaven proclaimeth you his enemies, and resolveth on your destruction, if you do not soundly and seasonably repent. (Luke xix. 27, and xiii. 3, 5.)

Be not offended with me, that, on a day of thanksgiving, I thus far forbid you to rejoice, for it is not you that are qualified for it, or have any part or fellowship in this business, being in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of your iniquity, your hearts being not right in the sight of God. Though the invitation be general, it supposeth that you come prepared, and therefore even he that calls men to his joys, will find out him that hath not on the wedding garment, "and will bind him, and cast him into outer darkness, where shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxii. 12, 13.) 1. Alas! sirs, if God would allow you to rejoice, how willingly could I allow it you. But hear whether he approve it. (Jam. v. 1, 3.) "Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming on you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it

were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.' (Luke vi. 24—26.) "Wo unto you that are rich, (if you have no better riches,) for ye have received your consolation. Wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger. Wo unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you," &c.; you may find your lesson, Joel. ii. 12, 13, "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart." You see what God calls such men to. And if he allow you not to rejoice till you are converted, if I or any man should flatter or cheat you into joy, it would be but a curse to you, and not a benefit.

2. Were your joy but reasonable, I would not discourage it. But a madman's laughter is no very lovely spectacle to yourselves. And I appeal to all the reason in the world, whether it be reasonable for a man to live in mirth that is yet unregenerate, and under the curse and wrath of God, and can never say, in the midst of his greatest pomp or pleasure, that he is sure to be an hour out of hell, and may be sure he shall be there for ever, if he die before he have a new, a holy, and a heavenly nature, though he should die with laughter in his face, or with a jest in his mouth, or in the boldest presumption that he shall be saved, yet, as sure as the word of God is true, he will find himself everlastingly undone, as soon as ever his soul is departed from his body, and he sees the things that he would not believe. Sirs, is it rational to dance in Satan's fetters, at the brink of hell, when so many hundred diseases are all ready to mar the mirth, and snatch away the guilty soul, and cast it into endless desperation? I exceedingly pity the godly in their unwarrantable, melancholy griefs; and much more an ungodly man that is bleeding under his wounds of conscience. But a man that is merry in the depth of misery, is more to be pitied than he. Methinks it is one of the most pitiful sights in all the world to see a man ruffle it out in bravery, and spend his precious time in pleasures, and melt into sensual, foolish mirth, that is a stranger to God, and within a step of endless wo! When I see their pomp, and feasting, and attendance, and hear their laughter, and insipid jests, and the fiddlers at their doors or tables, and all things carried as if they had made sure of heaven, it saddeneth my heart to think, alas! how little do these sinners know the state that they are in, the God that now beholdeth them, the change that they

are near ! How little do they think of the flames that they are hastening to, and the outcries and lamentations that will next ensue.

3. Your mirth is disingenuous and dishonest as long as you are without a title to heaven. You slight the Lord that can find such matters of rejoicing, when you have not his favour to rejoice in, and are under his displeasure. While you are refusing Christ, abusing grace, resisting the Spirit, serving the flesh, and undoing your own souls, it cannot be an honest or ingenuous thing for such as you to live in joy.

4. If your mirth were truly honourable to you, it were the more excusable. But to laugh in sin and misery, and make merry so near the endless wo, is a greater shame to your understandings, than to make sport to set your house on fire. This is the laughter of which Solomon might well say, "Thou art mad," and the mirth of which he saith, "What doth it." (Eccl. ii. 2.)

5. Would thy mirth do thee any good, we would not discourage it, yea, if it did not do thee harm. But O how many are now in sorrow by the means of their unseasonable, sinful mirth ! They are too jocund to hear the preacher, or their consciences, or to observe the checks and motions of God's Spirit, or to spend now and then an hour in retired, sober thoughts of their everlasting state. Should we but presume to call them to exercise their reason, and mind them of these most needful things, and tell them, "O poor distracted mortals, your time is given you for greater things than to fiddle, and dance, and drink, and jest, and prate, and compliment it away !" should we not be thought morose, or melancholy, or fanatics ? And should we not have some such answer as their ancestors in Sodom gave to Lot ? (Gen. xix. 9.) "Stand back. This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge : now will we deal worse with thee than with them ;" we will take a course with these controllers. Alas ! it is this foolish mirth that casteth men's reason and conscience asleep, and drowns the voice of sober words, so that God himself cannot be heard. Could we but get men to retired soberness and seriousness, we should hope that we might find a friend within them, and that we speak to men, and that reason would take part with the most reasonable motions that are made to them from the Lord.

6. Lastly. Would your groundless mirth endure, we would

not say so much against it. But, alas ! to be merry for a day, and then to lie in misery for ever, is a thing deserving no encouragement. We see it is a merry world with many that have least cause of mirth ; but how long will they continue it ? To see a man laugh, and play, and feast in a chariot, that drives on so fast to death, in a vessel that is on so swift a stream that ends in the gulf of endless horror, is a doleful sight. O how quickly will that merry countenance turn sad ! those proud looks be turned to an earthy paleness ; and those wanton eyes be mouldered to dust, and leave the empty holes to warn the next spectators to use his eyes more wisely while he hath them ? How quickly will these same sensual persons exchange their mirth for sighs, and groans, and endless torments, and fruitless lamentations, when they shall have everlasting leisure to peruse their lives, and to consider their ways, which now there is no persuading them to consider of ? Who can encourage such hurtful and unseasonable mirth as this ? “ Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people, for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God.” (Hos. ix. 1.) “ Rejoice not in a thing of nought,” (Amos vi. 13,) much less in the sufferings of your brethren ; (Obad. 12,) and, least of all, in any hurt that befalls the church. If enmity to holiness, and exalted impiety, should take occasion to triumph, we answer, as Micah, vii. 8, 9, “ Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise : when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me : I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me : he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.”

If you think I have stood too long on the first part of my text ; it is not to rebuke your holy joy, but only to promote it, and repress that carnal joy which is more destructive to it than sorrow itself. As you must “ seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and then other things shall be added to you,” (Matt. vi. 33 ;) so must you rejoice first in the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness that is the way thereto, and then you may add a moderate rejoicing in the things below in a due subordination thereunto. You have the sum in the words of the Holy Ghost, “ Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might ; let not the rich man glory in his riches ; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord,” &c. (Jer. ix. 23, 24.)

2. My next address must be to them whose names are written in heaven, and that with a twofold exhortation.

1. "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven." It is you, Christians, that joy of right belongs to. Little know the lovers of pleasure more than God that they lose a thousand fold more pleasure than they win: and that by running from a holy life for pleasure, they run from the fire into the water for heat, and from the sun into a dungeon for light. O show the unbelieving world, by your rejoicing, how they are mistaken in their choice! Be ashamed that an empty sot, and one that must be for ever a firebrand in hell, should live a more joyful life than you! O do not so wrong your Lord, your faith, your endless joys, as to walk in heaviness, and cast away the joy of the Lord which is your strength, and to be still complaining, when those that are prepared for the slaughter are as frolic as if the bitterness of death were past. It is well that you have so much life as to feel your sicknesses; but it is not well, that because you are yet diseased, the life of grace and of glory should be so ineffectual to your comfort. And yet, alas! how common is it to see the most miserable frisk and fleer, while the heirs of life are sinfully vexing themselves with the inordinate fears of death. Lift up thy head, Christian, and remember whence came thy graces, even thy least desires, and whither do they tend. Where is thy Father and thy Head, and the most dear of thy companions? Where is it that thou must live to all eternity? Doth it beseem a companion of angels, a member of Christ, a child of God, an heir of heaven, to be grieved at every petty cross, and to lay by all the sense of his felicity, because some trifle of the world falls cross to his desires and commodity? Is it seemly for one that must be everlastingly as full of joy as the sun is full of light, to live in such a self-troubling, drooping state, as to disgrace religion, and frighten away the ungodly from the doors of grace, that, by your joyful lives, might be provoked to enter? I know, as to your happiness, the matter is not comparatively great; because if mistakes and the devil's malice should keep you sad here a hundred years, yet heaven will wipe away all tears, and those joys will be long enough when they come; and as the joy of the ungodly, so the sorrows of the humble, upright soul will be but for a moment; and though you weep and lament when the world rejoiceth, as their joy shall be turned into sorrow, so your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and your joy shall no man take from you. But, in the mean time, is it

not shame and pity that you should live so unanswerable to the mercies of the Lord? that you should sinfully grieve the comforting Spirit by the wilful grieving of yourselves, and that you should peevishly cast away your precious mercies, when you so much need them, by reason of the troubles of a vexatious world, which you cannot avoid? That you, even you, that are saved by the Lord, should still be questioning it, or unthankfully denying his great salvation, and so much hinder the salvation of others? For the Lord's sake, Christians, and for your soul's sake, and in pity to the ungodly, yield not to the tempter, that would trouble you when he cannot damn you? Is God your Father, and Christ your Saviour, and the Spirit your Sanctifier, and heaven your home? And will you make all, for the present, as nothing to you, by a causeless, obstinate denial? If you are in doubt, let not mere passionate fears be heard; and let not the devil, the enemy of your peace, be heard: but peruse your evidences, and still remember, as the sum of all, that the will is the man, and what you would be that you are before the Lord. If you cannot see the sincerity of your hearts, go to your faithful, able guides, and open the case to them, and let not passion prevail against the Scripture and reason which they bring. Yea, if in your trouble you cannot by all their helps perceive the uprightness of your hearts, I must tell you, you may stay yourselves much upon their judgment of your state. Though it cannot give you full assurance, it may justly help to silence much of your self-accusations, and give you the comfort of probability. If a physician that feels not what you feel, shall yet, upon your speeches and other evidences, tell you that he is confident your disease is not mortal, nor containeth any cause of fear, you may rationally be much encouraged by his judgment, though it give you no certainty of life. As wicked men through contempt, so many godly people through melancholy, do lose much of the fruit of the office of the ministry, which lieth much in this assisting men to judge of the life or death of their souls. 'Alas!' say they, 'he feels not what I feel: he used to judge charitably, and he knoweth not me so well as I know myself.' But when you have told him faithfully, as you do your physician, what it is that you know by yourself, he is able to pass a far sounder judgment of your life or death than yourselves can do, for all your feeling: for he knows better what those symptoms signify, and what is used to be the issue of such a case as yours. Be not then so proud or wilful as to re-

fuse the judgment of your faithful pastors, about the state of your souls, in a confidence on your own.

And look not for more, as necessary to your comforts, than God hath made necessary. Is it nothing to have a title to eternal life, unless you be also as holy as you desire? Yea, is it nothing to have a desire to be more holy? Will you have no comfort, as long as you have distractions, or dulness, or such like imperfection in duty; and till you have no disease of soul to trouble you, that is, till you have laid by flesh, and arrived at your perfect joy? Dare not to disobey the voice of God: "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous; and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart." (Psalm xxxii. 11.) "Rejoice evermore." (1 Thess. v. 16.) Let it be something that heaven cannot weigh down that shall suppress thy joy. Art thou in poverty, and is not heaven sufficient riches? Art thou in disgrace, and shalt thou not have honour enough in heaven? Art thou in danger from the injustice or the wrath of man, and is he not Almighty that hath undertaken to justify thee? (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) Dost thou languish under pining sicknesses, and is there not everlasting health in heaven? Art thou weak in knowledge, in memory, in grace, in duty; troubled with uncommanded thoughts and passions; and was it not so on earth with all who are now in heaven? O Christians! make conscience of obeying this command; "Rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Did you but know how God approveth such rejoicing, and how much it pleaseth him above your pining sorrows; and how it strengtheneth the soul, and sweeteneth duty, and easeth suffering, and honoureth religion, and encourageth others, and how suitable it is to gospel grace, and to your high relations and ends, and how much better it serves to subdue the very sins that trouble you, than your fruitless, self-weakening complainings do. I say, did you well consider all these things, it would sure revive your drooping spirits.

And do not say now, 'I would rejoice if I were sure that my name were written in heaven; but I am not sure.' For, 1. Who is it long of that you are not sure? You may be sure that he that valueth and seeketh heaven as better than earth, and that loveth the holy way to heaven, and the most heavenly people, is indeed an heir of heaven; and you may be sure, if you will, that this is your own case: and yet you say you are not sure that your names are written in heaven. If God give you his grace, and

you deny it, will you therefore deny your right to glory, and make one sin the excuse for another?

2. And if you are not sure, is it nothing to have your probabilities, and hopes, and the judgment of your able, faithful pastors, that your souls are in a safe condition? We dare not say so to the careless world, nor to the most of men, as we do to you.

Especially take heed lest melancholy habituate you to fears and griefs; and then religion must bear the blame, and you undergo a calamitous life, though you are the heirs of heaven. To this end, 1. Use not musing, serious thoughts beyond the strength of your brain and intellect. 2. Place not too much of your religion in the perusals and study of your hearts; but (for such as are inclined to melancholy) it is the fruitfulest way to be much in expending duties abroad, and labouring to do good to others. Such duties have less of self, and have much of God, and divert the troubling, melancholy thoughts, and bring in more comfort by way of reward, than is usually got by more direct inquiring after comfort. 3. Use not too much solitariness and retiredness: man is a sociable creature; and as his duty lieth much with others, so his comfort lieth in the same way as his duty. 4. Take heed of worldly sorrows, and therefore of overvaluing worldly things. 5. Take heed of idleness, or of thinking that the duties of holiness are all that you have to mind; but make conscience of being diligent in a particular calling, which diverts the hurtful, troubling thoughts, and is pleasing unto God. 6. Take not every sickness of your souls for death, but rejoice in that life which enableth you to be troubled at your diseases. Keep under melancholy by these means, (and the advice of the physician,) and you will escape a very great hinderance to this high and holy duty of heavenly rejoicing.

II. But you think, perhaps, that I have all this while forgotten the duty proper to the day: No; but I was not fit to speak for it, nor you fit to hear and practise it, till the impediment of carnal rejoicing was removed, and till we had begun with heavenly joy. It is heaven that must animate all our comforts. They are so far sweet as heaven is in them, and no further. Now, therefore, if you first rejoice for your heavenly interest, I dare safely then persuade you to rejoice in the mercies which we are to be thankful for this day. And though some of them are but yet in the birth, if not in the womb, and we are yet uncertain

what they will prove, that will not excuse us for any unthankfulness for the first conception or infancy of our mercies. And though Satan seek to get advantage by them, that will not excuse us for our overlooking the mercy in itself. And though there are yet abundance of fears and troubles on the hearts of many of Christ's servants through the land, we cannot by any such accidents be excused from the thankful observation of the workings of the Lord. All mercies on earth, even spiritual mercies, have their mixtures of trouble, and their imperfections; but must not therefore be denied or extenuated. And though many that are dear to us, smarting by the change, will be offended and grieved at our most moderate thanksgiving, we must not therefore offend the Lord by our disregardfulness of his works.

There are these things to be commemorated by us this day, which I dare not overlook. 1. That God hath so honoured his justice and impartiality, as to show how he hateth sin in whomsoever. And indeed the justice of God itself would seem more amiable to us, were we not so selfish as to think hardly of all that is hurtful unto us. Justice demonstrateth the holiness of God, and all the appearances of his holiness are lovely in themselves.

2. That the holy God hath disowned heresy and divisions on the one side, as well as impiety and profaneness on the other; and that his wisdom thought meet to acquaint us experimentally with the hurtfulness of both, and our danger of both, as he did in former ages of the church. We first found the serpentine malice of the ungodly, and God delivered us when they would have swallowed us up. But while we only heard and read of heresy and schism, and that too often abusively applied to many of the most peaceable servants of the Lord, we understood not the mischief of those evils, but were ready to take the very names to be but the reproaches of piety itself. But God saw meet to let out a flood of this sort of calamities, and to suffer heresy to disgrace itself by its unrighteous fruits, that by those fruits we might the better know it. We never knew before how much we are beholden to him for saving us from this sort of evils; and should never have sufficiently hated them, if we had not smarted by them.

3. It is a mercy to be thankful for, that thus the church is notably fortified against ever relapsing into heresy or schism for the time to come.

4. And that the frailties of men professing godliness having

so lamentably appeared, they are taught to take heed of spiritual pride, and to know and distrust themselves, and not to be high-minded, but to fear.

5. It is a very great mercy, for which I must profess I was thankful from the first appearance of it,* that so many that I hope are dear to God, have the advantage of his frowns to further their conviction, and repentance, and salvation. As prosperity was the temptation by which ambition got advantage, and Providence misunderstood was pleaded against the holy rule, what a mercy it is that Providence also should undeceive them, and vindicate itself, and teach men hereafter by the example of this age to stay till the end before they take the sense of Providence, or rather to adhere to the holy word because the longest liver shall be too short-lived to see the end, so far as to furnish him for such an interpretation. And therefore that word that is the glass in which we can foresee the end must be our guide. I had rather have my friend poor and penitent, than wealthy and impenitent; and rather in a prison, than in the chains of pride. And am glad that God hath taken away the snare that brought so many souls to so sad a pass; and hath undeceived them in part, that had carnal thoughts of the happiness of saints, and looked for temporal reign and dignity; forgetting that rich men must pass through a needle's eye to heaven, and that lowliness, meekness, humility, patience, forbearing, forgiving, self-denial, contempt of this world, and living all upon things unseen, is the life that Christ by his doctrine and example taught us, and how ill prosperity befriendeth these. I am in far more hope to see many Peters go out and weep bitterly, than I was when they prospered in a sinful way. And if yet any be so far unhumbled, as to deny it to have been a sinful way, I am in far greater hope of their conviction now than heretofore. In their greatness few durst tell them of their crimes; and those of us that did it were voluminously reproached, threatened, calumniated, and represented as turbulent to the world. (It being usual with base-spirited men to take the judgment of the greatest for their rule, and to think all suffering to be just and honourable that is inflicted by such as few dare to contradict.) But now, I hope, plain dealing may recover many that before lived under flatteries, and were above reproof

* We kept this thanksgiving voluntarily in Worcestershire, by agreement among the associated ministers, as we do here this day. See the agreement published by *The Weekly Mercury*.

I must profess that my hopes of the saving of many that are dear to me, by the furtherance of this providence, is matter of so much thankfulness to me, that were I sure to suffer with them I would yet give thanks.

6. It is matter of thanksgiving to me that God hath so far owned an unanimous, painful, faithful ministry, (for all their many sad infirmities,) as first to break the profane opposers of them, and then to scatter the adversaries on the other side. Ever since I heard it so familiar among them to call Christ's faithful servants by so many reproachful names, as priests, (in scorn,) presbyters, drivins, jack presbyters, black-coats, pulpiteers, &c., and their friends priest-ridden; to suffer quakers openly in the streets to revile them as deceivers, dogs, wolves, hirelings, false prophets, liars, and all the names that hell could teach them, I waited in fear for the judgments of the Lord; which he hath executed in our sight, and caused us to know, that his delays are no desertions of his servants, nor justification of our revilers. And let it stand as a warning to you that have seen it, and you that have executed the punishments of God upon the reproachers, that you take heed of falling into the same crime, and dashing on the rock on which they have been broken; but let all England hear and fear, and do no more so malignantly or presumptuously.

And O that the unworthy ministers of Christ may remember that we are not vindicated and delivered to contend, or to imitate our afflictors, in seeking greatness to ourselves, nor to live in idleness, and neglect the souls committed to our care.

7. It is very great cause of thankfulness in my eyes, that from first to last God hath been so tender of the honour of his unanimous sober people, and his cause, of the innocency and consciences of his servants; as to execute his afflictions mostly by the hands of erring men; and to keep the rest by imprisonments, seclusions, and other means, so far from all appearance of consent or irregularities: and that at last he hath put an opportunity into their hands to declare to the world their innocency in things with which they were reproached; and that while profane opposers of religion did boast and vapour, and swear and curse, and drink healths for His Majesty's restitution, it is those whom they reproached that have silently and effectually accomplished it, and that with speed, as soon as they had power.

8. It is some matter of thankfulness to me, that whereas, to

our perpetual shame we could not in so many years compose the disagreements in church affairs among us, we are not altogether without hope that agreement may be now more effectually procured ; not only because those carnal advantages that hindered it with some are taken from them, and suffering will dispose some more to peace ; but because we are persuaded the disposition, and we are sure the interest, of His Majesty standeth for our reconciliation and unity. And verily we are the most inexcusable people in the world, if our own long and sad experience do not resolve us to do the utmost in that work ourselves, which, if we are not horribly proud and wilful, is easy to accomplish.

9. And it is matter of thanksgiving that God hath been all along so wonderfully seen in the work ; which makes us hope that the issue will yet be for our good. The first sparks that set fire on the last foundation are yet much unknown, but were so little as makes it the more strange. The wonderful whirlwind that suddenly finished the subversion was marvellous, though sad, because of the wickedness of men. The introducing of the remnant of the members ; the stop that was given them, when they had voted in a committee a liberty in religion, that excepted not popery ; the casting them out by those that set them up ; the discoveries of the fallaciousness of some of their chiefs, who were then tempted into a compliance with the army, and were fabricating a new form of a Commonwealth ; the breaking of them and of the army, in part by the returning members ; the unexpected stop that was given first to their proceedings by His Excellency in the North ; the expeditionness, the constancy, the unanimity and strange successfulness of that attempt, that an army who thought themselves only fit to be the nation's security for liberty and religion, and were thought necessary to be entailed upon us to that end ; that were so heightened in their own and other men's esteem, by their many and wonderful successes, should in a moment (we scarce know how) fly all into pieces as a grenado that is fired ; that Ireland at the same time should be so strangely and easily reduced, and that by sober, faithful hands, and by so few, and with such speed ; that this famous city should be so unanimously excited to concur so eminently, and contribute very much to the success ; that His Excellency should conquer without any blows ; and that all be despatched that since is done with no considerable resistance ; all this, and much more, do make us

wonder at the hand of God. And seldom is there so wonderful an appearance of the Lord, but it holds forth matter that is amiable as well as admirable to his church.

Lastly. That all this is done with little or no effusion at all of blood, when so much blood was shed in the foregoing changes, advanceth the wonder to a greater height : and I hope His Majesty and the two Houses of Parliament will take notice how God hath gone before them in a tender and unbloody change, and will not hearken to them that protest against revenge, while they would use it under the name of justice. When the wheel of Providence turneth so fast, if all that have the advantage of executing their wills under the name of justice should take their advantage, you know what names and sufferings multitudes of the most useful members in such nations, in the several vicissitudes, must incur to the detriment of the commonwealth and governors.

III. You see what cause we have of thankfulness ; but I must tell you that these, as all inferior mercies, are imperfect things, and being but means to greater matters, the heavenly interest first treated on, they are no further significant or valuable than they have some tendency to their end : and I must further tell you, that it is much committed into the hands of man, under God, whether such beginnings shall have a happy or unhappy end. If Christ become to many a stumbling-stone, and be set for the fall of many in Israel, (Luke ii. 34,) and if the gospel itself prove the savour of death to some, no wonder if it be yet possible and too easy for a sinful land to turn these fore-mentioned mercies and successes into most heavy judgments, and to rob themselves of all the honour and the benefit. And therefore, above all, for the Lord's sake, and for a poor, tired, yet hoping nation's sake, and for the sake of the cause of Christ through the world, I beseech you all, from the highest to the lowest, that you will be awakened to an holy vigilancy, and look about you in your several places, lest the enemy of Christ and you should play his aftergame more successfully than now you can foresee : and lest the return of a sinful nation to their vomit should make the end yet worse than the beginning. It is not enough to have begun ; the fruit of all is yet behind. I must here deal plainly with you, however it be taken, lest I be charged with unfaithfulness at the dreadful tribunal, to which both you and I are hastening. If these beginnings, through your neglects, or any others that have been the instruments,

should now be turned to the reviving and strengthening of profaneness, and malignity against the holy ways of God; to the introduction of mere formality in religion; to the casting out, or weakening the hands of the faithful ministers in the land; to the destruction of order and discipline in the churches; to the suppression of orderly and edifying meetings for mutual assistance in the matters of salvation; or to the cherishing of ignorance or popery in the people, it will blast the glory of all that you have done, and turn the mercy into gall. Believe it, the interest of Christ and holiness will be found at last the surest ground for any prince to build his interest upon; and the owning of corrupt and contrary interests that engage men in quarrels with the interest of Christ, is it that hath undone so many princes and states already, that it should make the greatest learn at last, to account it their highest honour to be the servants of the King of Saints, and to devote their power to the accomplishment of his will. I need not tell you that it is the sober, godly, conscionable sort of men that know what they do, and why, that will be the honour of their governors, and the most useful of their subjects, and not the barbarous, malignant rabble, that understand not what belongs to the pleasing of God, the happiness of themselves, the good of the Commonwealth, or the honour of their king. And do you not think that remissness, to say no worse, of magistrates, who should restrain the insolencies of such, is not a great dishonour to our nation, and a great temptation to many in the country, that stand at a distance from the fountain of affairs, to continue their fears lest we have changed for the worst? Put yourselves in their cases, and tell me whether you could, with equal cheerfulness, keep this day, if you were used, as many able, faithful ministers and people are in the cities and countries of the land, who have their persons assaulted, their windows battered, their ministrations openly reviled, and that go in danger of their lives from the brutish rabble that were formerly exasperated by the magistrates punishing them, or the minister's reproof, or crossing them in their sins. As physicians are judged of, not so much by the excellency of their remedies, as by their success, and the people think of them as they see the patients live or die, so will they do by your great performances which you mention before the Lord this day. Should they prove to the suppression of serious godliness, and the setting up of the wicked of the land, I need not tell you what a name it will leave unto

the actors to all generations. But if you vigilantly improve them, as you have given us abundant reason to expect, then the issue shall be the healing concord of the churches, the curbing of profaneness, the promoting of a plain and serious ministry, and of the diligent service of the Lord. This is it that will make your names immortal, that have been the happy instruments of so blessed a work. How joyfully, then, will the subjects commemorate the happy introduction of their sovereign! With what love and honour will they hear his name! How readily will they obey him! How heartily will they pray for him! How precious will your memory be! And this will be numbered among the wonderful deliverances of England. If godliness be persecuted, or made a common scorn in the land, the Holy God will vindicate his honour, and make their names a scorn and curse that shall procure it; but if you exalt him, he will exalt you. Protect his lambs, and he will be your Protector. He is with you while you are with him. (2 Chron. xv. 2.) "Those that honour him, he will honour; and those that despise him shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. ii. 30.)