

Inf. 1. Sinning is more terrible than suffering, in the eyes of the children of God. They pray to be delivered from sin absolutely, at any rate, cost what it will. And they have good reason for it; for there is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest suffering. In sinning we are conformed to the devil, but in suffering to Jesus Christ. Let us then cry earnestly to God, that he may *deliver us from evil*.

2. It is a black mark of one that belongs not to God, when there is no parting betwixt him and his lusts. The word and providence works to the delivering the man from his sin, but he will not part with it; he is not content to let it go. It is not the spot of God's children.

3. A careless, fearless way of going through the world, without daily care of being ensnared in sin, is an evidence that the man is at home, and is not travelling Zion-ward. For those who are going through this world as a wilderness, are walking with fear and trembling through it, still saying, Lord, *lead us not into temptation*.

4. *Lastly*, It is in the nature of all God's children, to desire to be home. *Our Father which art in heaven,—deliver us from evil*. They know that this will never be completely and fully answered till they be beyond the clouds: but from their hearts they desire it. Let us evidence ourselves to be the children of God, by our ardent desires for this complete deliverance from sin.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. vi. 13.—*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.*

WE come now to the conclusion of the Lord's prayer, which teacheth us, 'to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him. And in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.'

In this conclusion three things are to be considered.

I. The connection thereof with the petitions.

II. The concluding sentence.

III. The concluding word.

IV. I shall deduce some inferences.

I. Let us consider the connection of this conclusion with the petitions in the particle *for*: which shews it to contain arguments to be

used in prayer for hearing: *q. d.* Lord, hear us, for the kingdom is thine, the power is thine, and the glory is thine; and teaches us, that when we pray, we should plead and pray, press our prayers, and enforce our petitions, with arguments and reasons, to be heard. I shall shew you,

1. The truth of it.
2. The reason of it.

First, I shall shew you the truth of this pleading. And that it is so, appears from,

1. The Lord himself's teaching us so to do, which shews it to be acceptable to him, since he himself directs us to it. We have the Mediator's direction for it in this pattern of prayer, petition 5. and conclusion. See also Luke xi. 5,—9. And the more of the Spirit that one has in prayer, he will have his mouth the more filled with arguments.

2. The practice of the saints. See how Moses pleads and reasons with God, Exod. xxxii. 11,—13. 'Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians say, for mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of, will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.' See also how Asa pleads, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. 'Lord it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude; O Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail against thee.' Job thought it a good way of praying, and longed to be at it, Job xxiii. 4. 'I would fill my mouth with arguments,' says he. The woman of Canaan recovered her arguments, when they seemed to be answered, Matth. xv. 22,—27. 'Have mercy on me,' says she, 'O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.'

3. The nature of the thing. In prayer men are upon business of the greatest weight, and utmost necessity, and should be in deep earnest in it; and ordinarily the Lord does not answer but to importunity. Is it not very natural in such a case to plead? Yea, what case can men be in that requires more importunate pleading, than that which relates to God's glory, and their everlasting felicity?

Secondly, I come to shew the reason of this pleading, why we should do so.

1. It is not to move, persuade, or bring over the Lord, to give us what we desire. Force of argument may prevail with man to change his mind, but the unchangeable God cannot be turned about with any reason or thing whatsoever. For 'with him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,' Jam. i. 17. 'He is in one mind, and who can turn him?' Job xxiii. 13.

2. But it is to exercise and strengthen our own praying graces, faith and fervency, &c. So that the effect of the pleading is on ourselves, not on God, though the consequent of it, by the divine purpose, is prevailing in prayer. It is true, the design of the pleading person is not on himself, though the effect is; neither ought it to be upon God, to move him, but upon the thing itself, to lay it out before the Lord, in the necessity and reasonableness of it. It is as if a hungry child should apply to his father for bread and the father should say, 'Child, wherefore should I give you bread?' and thereupon the child should say, 'Alas! I am pained with hunger, and who will give it me if you refuse? will it not be a reflection on your name, to say your children faint for lack of bread?' While the child pleads thus, the tear strikes in his eye, and his earnestness increases: whereupon he is answered. Here it is evident, that the effect of the pleading is not on the father; it would be but a child's weakness to think that the father is overcome with his arguments, though the consequent of the pleading is the child's getting bread: But the effect of it is plainly on the child himself, though the child designs it not so: And suppose the child to have so much wit, as to know that his arguments are not needed to persuade his father, his design of pleading in that case is on the thing itself, to hold out the necessity and reasonableness of it.

II. Let us consider the concluding sentence, *Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever*. Here I shall shew,

1. What is meant by *the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever*.

2. What is the import of this sentence.

FIRST, I am to shew what is meant by *the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever*.

1. By the *kingdom* is meant, not the kingdom of grace, nor the kingdom of glory either; but God's essential kingdom, his universal sovereignty over all persons and all things whatsoever.

2. The *power* is not authority whereby God may do, but the ability whereby he can do what he will, in that kingdom.

3. The *glory* is not God's essential glory, but the declarative glory, arising from what he doth in that kingdom, which will shine forth for ever through eternity.

SECONDLY, I am to shew, what is the import of this sentence. It is twofold, praise, and pleading arguments.

First, Praise. Hereby we praise him in our prayers, expressing high and honourable thoughts of him: *Thine is the kingdom, &c.* Thus we exalt him above ourselves, and all creatures whatsoever.

1. As the universal and absolute Monarch of all the creation, and the only one, 1 Chron. xxix. 11. 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in heaven and in the earth, is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.' Universal and absolute sovereignty are the flowers of the imperial crown of heaven, and belong to no other. There are many kings on earth, but they are all limited monarchs, and vassals to the King of heaven, who can have no competitor: *Lord, thine is the kingdom.*

2. As the Omnipotent, and only Omnipotent, *ibid.* The power of men and angels is but a shadow of power, weakness in comparison with God's. None of them all are capable to do what they are capable to will. But his power and will are of equal extent.

3. As the chief end of all things, *ibid.* and the only chief end. It is the peculiar prerogative of God to say, 'For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it,' Isa. xlviii. 11. All persons and things are for God, God is for himself; and the glory of all redounds to him, and will do for evermore.

This teaches us, That in our prayers we should praise God, as well as petition him. Praise is a comely mixture in all the parts of divine worship. It is most directly tending to God's honour; and it is the piece of worship that will last longest; when prayers, &c. are laid by in heaven, praise will be there for ever.

Observe. This pattern of prayer begins with praise, and ends with it too. For it is necessary, in the entrance, that we have our hearts awed with the divine glory, that so we may be the fitter to pray on: and in the end, that we may carry away high thoughts of God, for the better regulating of our life, in the intervals of duty.

Secondly, Let us consider the pleading arguments in prayer: and they are all taken from God himself. *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever.*

Observ. This teaches us to take our encouragement from God only in prayer, to draw our arguments from the consideration of what God is. This is a large field to fill our mouths with arguments, and to furnish us with suitable pleas in prayer.

Quest. May we not plead with God upon any thing in ourselves?
Ans. (1.) We may not plead upon any worthiness in ourselves or any other creature, Dan. ix. 18. 'We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.' 1 Tim. ii. 5. 'For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' (2.) Though in our pleading we may bring in both our evil and our good, yet the force of the plea or argument is not to be laid on either of them, but on something in God himself answerable thereto. David, brings in the greatness of his sin, in his plea for pardon; but the stress of the plea lies not there, but on God's own name, to be magnified greatly by the pardon of great sin, Psal. xxv. 11. 'For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity for it is great.' Hezekiah brings in his upright walking in the plea for prolonging his life, Isa. xxxviii. 3. 'Remember now, O Lord,' says he, 'I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.' But the stress of it lay on God's faithfulness in that promise, 1 Kings viii. 25. 'Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David, my father, that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me, as thou hast walked before me.'

Now, the plea for hearing, here put in our mouths, is threefold.

1. The kingdom is the Lord's. The stress of the argument from this is, Therefore thou mayest do it, thou hast full authority to grant us whatsoever thou wilt, Matth. xx. 15. 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?'

2. The power is the Lord's. Therefore thou canst do whatsoever we ask, over the belly of all opposition, and however hopeless it be in itself, Eph. iii. 20. 'He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.'

3. The glory is the Lord's. Therefore thou wilt do it, since thou lovest thy glory, and wilt have glory for evermore from answering our petitions, Josh. vii. 9. 'What wilt thou not do unto thy great name?'

III. Let us consider the concluding word, *Amen*. It imports two things. (1.) Our desire to be heard, q. d. so be it, Rev. xxii. 20. 'Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.' And the believer uses this word properly as a testimony of his desire, when by faith he is en-

abled and emboldened to plead with God, that he would fulfil his requests, 2 Chron. xx. 6, 11. (2.) Our confidence and assurance that we shall be heard; q. d. so certainly it shall be, Rev. i. 7. 'Even so Amen.' And the sincere Christian uses the word with great propriety in the conclusion of his prayers, in testimony of his assurance to be heard, when he is by faith emboldened quietly to rest upon the Lord, that he will fulfil the desires of his heart, 2 Chron. xiv. 11.

I conclude all with a very few inferences.

Inf. 1. Be fervent and importunate with God in prayer, and set yourselves to plead and pray, as men that are in the deepest earnest about a thing on which their highest interests were suspended, Jam. v. 16. If earnestness and importunity are any where required, here they are highly, nay, absolutely requisite.

2. Let not complaints jostle out praises from your prayers, but still remember that every day affords you as much matter of praise as of request. God's mercies are new every morning; let therefore the sacrifice of praise be a part of the daily sacrifice ye offer unto God. Never bow a knee unto God for supplicating a mercy from him, without praising him for what mercies ye enjoy. This is a very promising way of obtaining the requests ye make at the throne of grace in the confidence of faith.

3. Deeply consider what a God he is with whom you have to do, to fill your mouth with arguments. Pleas in prayer may be fetched, and faith will fetch them, from every divine attribute and perfection; and faith will improve these pleas in such a manner as to procure the good things it applies to the throne for. 'What wilt thou not do to thy great name?' is a standing plea for faith, which can never be rejected. Mercy, holiness, justice, truth, &c. all magnified by the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, will be never-failing pleas in the mouth of the prayer of faith.

4. *Lastly*, Use not Amen superficially at the end of your prayers, but with earnestness and faith. As for those who think it superstition to say *Amen*, they are ignorant of the word of God; and I would recommend to them to consult their Bible and Catechism, in order to cure them of that senseless conceit.

And thus, by the good hand of God upon me, I have finished what I intended by way of illustration of the great doctrines of the Christian religion, with respects to faith and practice, as compendized, from the Holy Scriptures, in our Shorter Catechism. I am sensible of many defects in the prosecution of such a large work; for who is sufficient for these things? but I have endeavoured, according to the measure of grace given unto me, to declare unto you what I am per-

suaded is truth, agreeable to the word of God, the rule and standard of all religious truth. And I would now ask you, What entertainment have ye given to the great and important truths laid before you, from the Lord's word, in the course of these sermons, in which I have been engaged a considerable part of several years? Do ye now believe? Have ye embraced these doctrines with a divine faith, a faith of the operation of God? have ye received the truths into your hearts? and are your hearts moulded into the image of them? Are they become the food and nourishment of your souls, so as ye are made to esteem them more than the food that is necessary for the support of your natural life? Are they written on your hearts, and impressed on your consciences, so as to become an effective principle of new obedience? Is the effect of them the sanctification of your hearts and lives? and is the result of the whole an earnest desire to know the truth more fully and clearly, and to regulate every motion and desire of your hearts, every word of your mouths, and every action of your lives, by the truth, so as ye may be enabled through grace to do the whole will of God? If these catechetical discourses have not produced some such effects upon you, or any of you, alas! they have been all lost as to any saving benefit to your souls, and will be a swift and terrible witness against you in the day of the Lord Jesus. O, Sirs! consider, bethink yourselves, recollect the great and important truths I have been laying before you, drawn from the pure and uncorrupted fountain of the Lord's word, and let them have a suitable and lasting influence on your hearts and lives. If ye imprison the truth, and hold it in unrighteousness, by resisting and opposing its effect, which is sanctification, John xvii. 17. and refusing to let it rule over you, and raising up your lusts against it, and unrighteously smothering and suppressing it, ye do so at a terrible risk: 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness,' Rom. i. 18. It is very probable that many of you at least have acquired more knowledge of the principles of religion, than ye had formerly; and I am obliged to own, that your knowledge of the truths thereof is as much generally, as ever I observed in other places. But is it sanctifying saving knowledge, or only merely speculative, floating in your heads, without having a due and efficacious influence upon your hearts? Alas! I must say, that truth is held prisoner with a witness among us, and that our lives are not answerable to our light, and I am much afraid it may bring wrath on the place. I therefore earnestly beseech and exhort one and all of you, to study to know the truth as it is in Jesus, to have a heart experimental knowledge thereof, a real feeling and sensation of the

xxii. 9. Every thing that is numbered must have a beginning; and therefore God's duration is not liable to numbering. But we may soon perceive our beginning to be in the world; and thence learn and observe,

(1.) That it is by divine appointment, and not by necessity of our nature, that we continue to be. The latter is proper to God only; by the former, angels and men, and all creatures, are continued in being. For he that once had no being, can never claim a natural necessity of continuing to be.

(2.) That every moment of our life hangs on the divine will and pleasure, Rev. iv. ult. There is no necessary connection betwixt your living this moment and living the next. The only bond betwixt them is God's word of appointment, Heb. i. 3. Loose that, and remove it, our life goes, and our eyes shall never see the next moment. No food, no physic, can prevent it, Matth. iv. 4. There is no outliving that word, Psal. xc. 3. 'Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men,' so much as for one moment.

(3.) That we must go the way of all flesh; for many of those we found in the world at our coming into it, are now gone, Zech. i. 5. This world is always like a fair near the height, where some are coming in, others going out, and those within in confusion, Eccl. i. 4. I doubt not but there may be some in this house this day, who, if they will consider, shall not find one of all those that filled it at their first coming into it. But these are gone, and others have come into the room of them all. And shall not others reckon so of us in a little time?

2. Our days will have an end, and we must seriously consider that. Hence says the Psalmist, Psal. xxxix. 4. 'Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is.' Every thing that is numerable has an end; and therefore eternity cannot be numbered, since it hath no end. But we may soon come to the end of our count, when we are counting our days; and thence may learn and observe,

(1.) That the shored tree will be cut down at length. 'I know that thou wilt bring me to death,' says Job, 'and to the house appointed for all living,' Job xxx. 23. When we were first planted in this world, the axe was laid down at the root of the tree, and we have grown up beside it. There is never a pain nor stitch, but it is a stroke of that axe, a pledge of a greater. Sometimes it has almost struck through, but in a little time it will go through altogether. So that man shall lie down, and not rise till the heavens be no more.

(2.) We will need nothing for this life ere long. Dip not so deep

in the cares of this world as most do, to the ruin of their souls. Many have been anxious to provide for the day which they never saw, as the rich man in the parable did, Luke xii. 17,—20. The clods of earth will serve for back and belly ere long, and we will have no portion in what is done under the sun; others will possess the houses, land, &c. which we now occupy.

(3.) See now how ye will begin eternity. It will begin with us when our days are come to an end; and as we begin it, so we will continue in it, Heb. ix. 27. Our state now is alterable, but then it is unalterable for ever. Therefore now or never let us secure a happy eternity. Learn your duty from the unjust steward, the serious consideration of which I recommend to you, Luke xiv. 3,—8.

(4.) Working time for eternity will not last. It closeth with the end of our days: Therefore 'whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest,' Eccl. ix. 10.

Use. Be not idle spectators of the dispensation of this day. Number your days, so as ye may apply your hearts unto wisdom. If you will not take warning to prepare for eternity, by the removal of others, take heed lest God make you a warning to others. Let the aged and young hear the voice of the rod, and seriously improve it.

3. Our days are few, and we must consider, that they are the number of a man, they may be counted. There are some things not innumerable in themselves, yet cannot be numbered for their multitude. But there is no such multitude of the days of our life.

(1.) Consider the counters the scripture affords us to count our days by. A web, Isa. xxxviii.; it is such a web as one is still working at without intermission, and therefore will soon be cut out:—grass, and a flower soon withered, Isa. xl. 6, 7;—green at morn, and cut down at night, Psal. xc. 6:—a vapour that vanisheth away, frail, uncertain, and of short continuance, Jam. iv. 14:—smoke, Psal. cii. 3:—a wind, a blast, or puff, Job vii. 7:—a sleep, Psal. xc. 5:—a dream, Job xx. 8:—a hand-breadth, Psal. xxxix. 5:—nothing, *ibid.* compare Eccl. iii. 2. Count with these counters, and the reckoning will be very small, which the scripture also has cast up to our hands.

(2.) Consider the scripture-reckoning of man's life. The highest reckoning is by years, now brought down to a few scores, Psal. xc. 10. Nay, as we count the age of infants by months, so is man's age reckoned, Job xix. 5. As if months were too big a word, it is brought down to days, and a few days, Job xiv. 1; yea, to one day, wherein there is but a morning, noon, and evening, Job xiv. 6; and
 'lower, to an hour, 1 John ii. 18; aye, to a moment, that is past

ere one is aware, 2 Cor. xv. 17. Prov. xii. 19. So the sum of our days is very small.

From both ye may find that our days are few; and thence learn and observe,

(1.) It is no safe counting to count many years to come, whatever ye be, lest ye be out in your account, as the rich man was, Luke xii. 19, 20. Many whose youth and strength seemed to give them ground for counting so, have been forced to see their mistake, and count again, little to their comfort, death coming ere it was looked for.

(2.) Our days will soon be at an end. We will quickly be over our hand-breadth. They fly like a shadow, Job xiv. 2. And though a weaver's shuttle is very swift, in going from one side of the web to the other, our days are swifter than it is, Job vii. 6. See what Job says, chap. ix. 25, 26. 'Now my days are swifter than a post; they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.'

(3.) We have no time to be idle. Our work for eternity is great, for it is long, and our time is short. They who have much work, little time to do it in, little strength to do it with, and much opposition to wrestle against, had need to lose no time, John ix. 4. The shadows of the evening are stretched out; we have made but little way; let us therefore mend our pace.

(4.) *Lastly*, We must make the considering of our days, a serious business. The counting of them to purpose will not do otherwise. It deserves it, for eternity lies upon it; a mistake in that may be fatal; and we are very ready to miscount our days. And,

[1.] Make it a work by itself. If one have but a few threads to count, they will let other work alone till that be done; for it is of that nature that it will not mix with other pieces of work. Surely at any time, and much more at this time, God calls us to take some particular time for this work, Hag. i. 5.

[2.] Hold to it, till you have done it to purpose. Counting is not a work to be done by fits and starts. If it be broken off, readily all that is counted is lost, and one must just begin again, having lost his count. Fleeting thoughts of the shortness and uncertainty of time are to little purpose. The impression they make is soon worn off.

[3.] Dip into the business, and be not overly in it. One thing that is counting will be loath to hear or answer a word spoken to him, lest he miss his count. Satan and our ill hearts are apt to cast in diversions to those employed in counting their days; and by that means many times mar the work. But ye must stop your ears, and mind your business.

II. I proceed to shew, that a time of mortality is a special call to this work.

1. It sets death and eternity in a particular manner before the eyes of mortals, as appears from this psalm wherein our text lies. It is a looking-glass wherein every one may see his own frailty; for the strength of the hale is no more the strength of stones, nor their bones brass, more than others whom death has cut down. What is the lot of one mortal to-day, may be the lot of another to-morrow; and that calls to consider it.

2. God, by laying his hand on some, speaks unto others, as appears from what our Lord says, Luke xiii. 1. and downwards, and warns them. And they that are wise will take warning, Micah vi. 9. And it is a sad evidence when people will not hear it. They look like those marked for destruction, who, in the face of God's judgments going abroad in a place still do wickedly, Isa. xxvi. 11.

3. It is an evidence of the Lord's anger against a land or country-side where it prevails, Amos iii. 8. And not laying it to heart is a contempt of God, that he will surely avenge, Psal. xxviii. 5. It speaks God to be risen up from his place to punish; and who knows who may fall ere God's sword, once drawn, be returned into its sheath?

Use. Let old and young comply with the call of God by the present sickness and mortality: let every one be stirred up thereby so to count their days, as they may apply their hearts unto wisdom. For motives, consider,

1. We will be most inexcusable, if after all these warnings death find us unprovided. The dispensation of the day is such, that no body needs to pretend to be surprised with death's coming to their own door, since it is carrying off so many, both young and old.

2. It is a piece of that duty we owe to an angry God, as we would not inflame his anger more against us, Psal. xxviii. 5. Amos iii. 8. It is not true courage, but stupidity and obstinacy, not to be deeply affected with the hand of God gone out against us. Let creatures despise, if they will, the stroke of their fellow worms, but let them not despise the stroke of God, Heb. xii. 5. It becomes saints of the highest pitch to fear God smiting, Luke xii. 4, 5.

3. This would be the way to get the stroke removed, or at least to get it sanctified, Hab. iii. 16. The design of Providence in the stroke is to stir us up to this duty, and the answering of the call of the rod bids fairest for the removal of it, Lev. xxvi. 41, 42. If not, the venom will be taken out of it; and if one be taken away being ^{ted} for it, he will exchange this life for a better.

Lastly, If this be misimproved, it lays us open to a worse,

Amos iv. 11, 12. In a land so full of sin, so often threatened with desolating strokes, and so often delivered, but nothing bettered by deliverances, this stroke looks rather like the beginning than the end of sorrows, rather like an earnest than the round sum, that might clear the accounts betwixt God and a sinful nation.

~~~~~

THE SERMON IN THE AFTERNOON.

WE are again met this day to humble ourselves under the hand of God, gone out against the congregation and country-side, in great sickness and mortality, and to deprecate the Lord's anger. I know no such expedient in our case, nor any thing that will bid so fair for the removal of the stroke, as our coming up to the standard of proficiency in the lesson in our text, which falls now to be spoken of, and which I shall cast into this doctrine.

DOCT. 'The right and necessary improvement of a time of bodily sickness and mortality, is to become wise for our souls.'

The Lord is putting particular persons and families among us, yea, all of us, to the school of affliction, since the hand of God gone out against some concerns all; and it is necessary we learn our lesson aright, and become wise thereby.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew what is that *wisdom* we must learn thereby.

II. Condescend on some particulars of *wisdom* which such a time calls us to apply our hearts to.

I. I am to shew, what is that *wisdom* we are to learn by a time of bodily sickness and mortality. It is serious godliness, or true religion. When one becomes seriously godly, leaving the way of sin, and entering on the way of faith and holiness, then he has learned the lesson that God is teaching us this day, Job xxviii. ult. 'Unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding.' This is the only true wisdom; and they continue arrant fools who do not arrive at it, whatever other wisdom they be masters of. This is the wisdom taught at God's school of affliction, Heb. xii. 10. The voice of the rod is, Be wise for your souls. That this is the true wisdom, appears in that,

1. It is practical wisdom, wisdom for regulating a man's life in the way to happiness, Hos. xiv. ult. How many are there accounted wise, who betray their folly in quite shooting by the mark, in the way of life they chuse, Jer. xxii. 13,—16. Surely that is wisdom which sets men in the true way to happiness, which is faith and ho-