

If you would not depart from God, the living God, through an evil heart of unbelief: be not too confident of your own strength in standing, but commit yourself, and your cause and your way, and your heart unto the Lord: the best swimmers are the soonest drowned: why? because they are the most confident, and the most confident people do the soonest fall and depart from the Lord. But our strength is to commit ourselves unto God, "Commit thy way unto the Lord," saith he; and the apostle in evil times, suffering times, calls upon us to do this, to commit ourselves into the hand of God, as into the hands of a faithful Creator. Are the times declining, and do many depart from the Lord? take heed, be not too confident, he that standeth, standeth by faith; be not too confident of your own standing, but commit your way, your souls, and your all unto God. He is best kept that the eternal God keeps: and if you commit yourselves unto him and his keeping he will certainly keep you. And thus have I given unto you these twenty directions, that so you may not through an evil heart of unbelief be drawn to depart from the living God.

SERMON IX.

A WARNING TO APOSTATES.

"Remember Lot's wife."—LUKE XVII. 32.

IN this chapter our Lord and Saviour Christ tells us how it shall be in the latter day, immediately before his second, or his last coming; which he declares by two similitudes or comparisons.

The first comparison is drawn from the days of Noah; wherein he observes their security and their punishment.

Security. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be, also, in the days of the Son of Man: they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, verses 26 and 27.

Punishment. And the flood came and destroyed them all.

The second comparison is drawn from the days and times of Lot, where you have their security and their punishment:

verse 18, Likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded.

The punishment. Verse 29, But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

The rendition. At the 30th verse: Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

Whereupon he dehorts them from the world and the care thereof. Verse 31, In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him, likewise, not return back.

Which he presseth by divers arguments.

The first is drawn from the example of Lot's wife, who for her looking back was turned into a pillar of salt.

The second argument is drawn from the contrary good, "Whosoever (saith he) shall lose his life shall preserve it." verse 33.

The third is drawn from the separation that Christ hath made between the nearest interest and relations at that day. Verse 34, "In that night there shall be two men in one bed, the one shall be taken and the other left; two women shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken and the other left; two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left."

I am now to deal with this first argument, drawn from the example of Lot's wife, who for her looking back to a worldly interest was turned into a pillar of salt.

"Remember Lot's wife;" and remember her at such a time, and remember her upon such an account. Christ would have us remember Lot's wife.

There is a special time when Lot's wife is to be remembered by us.

We are not only to read the story of Lot's wife, we may forget that; but we are frequently to consider and call it unto mind. A time there is, and a special time, when Lot's wife is to be remembered by us.

For the clearing and prosecuting thereof:

First, We will inquire what of Lot's wife is to be remembered by us?

Secondly, Why Lot's wife is to be remembered by us?

Thirdly, How Lot's wife is to be remembered by us?

Fourthly, What is the special time wherein Lot's wife is to be remembered by us?

Fifthly, How we should so remember Lot's wife as we may gain thereby?

Sixthly, And what we should do that we may so profitably remember Lot's wife?

As for the first, if it be said, What of Lot's wife is to be remembered by us?

I answer, Her sin and her punishment.

She was turned into a pillar of salt, she was stricken with a sore judgment, a mortal deadly stroke. She was not stricken as Miriam with a leprosy, but with a mortal deadly stroke; she was stricken with death.

As she was stricken with a mortal deadly stroke, so with a sudden stroke: she had no time given her to repent. It is a great mercy to die standing, to die exercising of grace; but to be stricken with death in the very height of one's sin, in the very act of one's sin, and to have no time given one to repent; this is a great judgment, and this befel her.

As it was a sudden stroke so it was an immediate stroke: from the hand of God immediately. Immediate mercies are the sweetest mercies, and immediate judgments are the sourdest judgments. Thus she was stricken by the hand of God immediately.

As she was stricken with an immediate stroke, an immediate hand of God; so this stroke, it was an exemplary stroke, for by it she was hanged up in chains, as it were, and gibbeted for all ages to take heed of; to take heed of looking back, declining and backsliding.

And she was stricken into a pillar of salt.

And if you ask, Why into a pillar of salt?

Why salt? Saith one, That by her example she might season others; that by her example, all of us might be warned to take heed of looking back to any worldly interest.

But I think also by her looking back, she in some measure complied and comported with the men of Sodom, as they were smitten with brimstone, fire and salt. Deut. xxix. 23. And the whole land thereof became brimstone and salt. So she, complying with them, and returning in her heart and

affections to them, partaking with them in their sin, doth partake with them also in their judgment, and so was turned into salt.

And into a pillar of salt, that is durable and of continuance. As the everlasting covenant is called a pillar of salt, so her body, for I speak not of her soul, neither doth the Scripture speak any thing concerning that, being turned into a material pillar of salt, for the longer continuance, that she might be an everlasting monument and warning to all generations to take heed of looking back, declining and backsliding: and thus she was turned into a pillar of salt. That is her punishment.

As for her sin that did bring her into this condition, it was exceeding great and heinous, for there was much disobedience it, being directly contrary unto the express commandment of God by the angel. In Gen. xix. the angels said, when they had brought them forth abroad, "Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain lest thou be consumed." Here was an express commandment that they should not look back. It seemed to be no great matter for Adam to eat an apple, a forbidden apple; but being directly contrary to God's express commandment, there was much disobedience in it. And so, though it seemed no great matter to look back, yet being directly contrary to God's express commandment, there was much disobedience in it.

Again, there might be much incredulity and unbelief in this thing, for she might doubt whether God would fulfil his word in destroying Sodom, as God had said; and so might look back to see whether the word of the Lord were fulfilled or no.

But besides, there might be and there was a great deal of carnal affection in looking back unto a worldly interest there; upon which account our Saviour Christ brings it in, in this chapter, and cautions men upon that.

Yea, there was in effect an apostasy, a typical apostasy, upon which account our Saviour Christ speaks on it, and saith he, "He that puts his hand to the plough, and looks back:" an apostasy there was in it. Now this apostasy of her's was aggravated by many circumstances.

By the goodness of her relation. The more gracious a

man's relations are, if he do decline, the greater is his sin, if he do decline. Now she was the wife of a gracious, holy man, and therefore for her to decline from such a relation, it was exceeding wicked.

And besides, as she did look back under such a relation, so she was not tempted thereunto. The less temptation to any sin, the greater the sin. Those that are tempted to sin, excuse themselves; "The woman thou gavest me, she gave me to eat:" but now Lot's wife could not say thus, I was tempted by Lot, or by any other; no, she was not over-borne by any temptation from without, and therefore her sin was the greater.

She sinned in good company. It is an evil thing to sin in any company, but the better the company is that I sin in, the worse is my sin. She had the company of her husband, she had the conduct of angels. Now upon this ground she sinned.

She sinned in the face of justice. It is an evil thing for a thief to sin at any time; but to cut a man's purse before the judge, while he is upon the bench doing justice, this is worse. God was now doing justice upon Sodom, and for Lot's wife to sin in the face of justice doing, it made her sin exceeding great.

And yet farther, to say no more in it, but that she sinned also in the face of great deliverance. God had now brought her out, husband, children, and self, and delivered them with a high hand. To sin in the face of a deliverance wrought with a high hand, is to sin with a high hand. Such was her deliverance, wrought with a high hand; and therefore for her to sin thus, was exceeding evil and very sinful. And thus you see what that is of Lot's wife that is to be remembered by us, namely, her sin and her punishment.

Secondly, But then why is Lot's wife to be remembered by us?

She is to be remembered by us, because that she is recorded, and her example is recorded for that end and purpose. She is hung up and gibbeted, as it were, for all that go by and read the Scripture to remember.

Again, If that whatsoever is written in the Old Testament, is written for our instruction, for our admonition, and judgments there recorded for our caution and warning; then

good reason that she and her example should be remembered. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning," Rom. xv. 4. And in 1 Cor. x. 5, speaking of the sins of the Israelites, "With many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them, as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day, three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer." At verse 11, "Now all these things happened unto them, for our ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Further, we are to remember Lot's wife, and she is to be remembered by us, that we fall not into the same condemnation. Read the history, lest thou thyself be made the judgment of God. The only way to be kept from afflictions ourselves, is to gain by other men's afflictions. How should we gain by such afflictions as these, if we should not remember them?

Again, if you look into Scripture you shall find, that of all the judgments that are recorded in Scripture, there is none so frequently mentioned and repeated, as the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah; in Gen. xix. once, in Jer. xx. again, and xlixth again, Hos. xi. again, Amos iv. again, Luke xvii. again, the Epistle of Jude again. So then look into Scripture, and you shall find there is no judgment so often repeated as this judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah: and why? That it may be observed in all the circumstances thereof.

And to say no more in it but this: there is a Sodom that is still to be destroyed, in Rev. xi. you find that Rome in the latitude thereof is called Sodom: Their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt. This Sodom is to be destroyed with fire; in Rev. xviii., She shall be utterly burnt with fire, verse 8. And as Lot was commanded to come out of So-

dom, so the people of God are commanded : “ Come out of her my people.”

And as Lot’s wife by looking back did partake with them in their sin, and so partake in their plagues, so, saith the Lord, “ Come out of her my people, that ye be not partaker of her sin, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” So then, there is a Sodom still which is to be destroyed, which we are to come out of ; spiritual Sodom ; and therefore even this of Lot’s wife coming out, is diligently to be considered and to be remembered by us, that we may know how to come out well : and thus we see the reasons why Lot’s wife is to be remembered by us.

Thirdly, But how is Lot’s wife to be remembered by us ?

She is to be remembered by us in a way of reflection, again and again to mind the story and example of Lot’s wife. You may oftentimes read the story, and may have forgot the same, but as the clean beast was to chew the cud, which in the Hebrew is a bringing of the meat into the mouth again ; so you may have oftentimes eaten up this story of Lot’s wife, but you are to chew the cud, and bring it into your memory again, to remember it in a way of reflection.

In a way of meditation ; I remember all thy marvellous works, and meditate thereon, saith David. Remembrance without meditation will do little good, it must be remembrance with meditation. And

As it must be with meditation, so with an holy fear, and reverence, and adoration. I have read of a heathen, that when he came by the gallows, he would always put off his hat, and bow and say, God save justice : and so now, when we come by this gibbet, we should not come by, but bow with fear, and reverence, and adoration, adoring the justice and the sovereignty of God in his proceedings. We are to remember Lot’s wife in a way of fear, and reverence, and adoration.

We are to remember Lot’s wife in a way of caution, so as to take heed by her. Remember how she looked back, and take heed that we do not look back. And thus we are to remember Lot’s wife.

Fourthly, But then what and when is the special time that Lot’s wife is to be remembered by us ?

It is good to remember her frequently : but we are in a

special manner to remember Lot's wife in the time of declining, in declining times remember her that you do not decline. Thus our Saviour Christ brings her in for to be remembered by us, that we do not look back, as she looked back.

We are to remember her in times of security, of great security. "As in the days of Noah," saith Christ, "they were in great security: they ate and drank," &c. "And as in the days of Lot, they ate, and drank, they married, they were in great security: Now, saith our Saviour, "so shall it be, but remember Lot's wife," So that in times of great security, Lot's wife is to be remembered by us.

She is to be remembered by us also, in time when God doth call upon his people by his dispensations to go out of Sodom, and make no delay; for so our Saviour also presses it to you, "Let not him that is on the house-top go down," &c., but "remember Lot's wife." God would have no delay then: so when God calls upon a people to come out of Sodom; make no delay, but "remember Lot's wife." Thus we see what the time is.

Fifthly, But what good shall we get by remembering Lot's wife? Is there any good to be gotten by remembering Lot's wife?

Yes, much every way: Something in a way of instruction, something in a way of caution.

By way of instruction: I shall lay before you ten or eleven instructions that we may gain hereby.

If this story of Lot's wife be true, and do live in our memory, then, why should not we stand and admire, and say, Lord, how unsearchable are thy judgments, and thy ways past finding out? Here are four, and but four that came out of Sodom, and yet one of the four were destroyed: God may deliver our family in the time of common calamity, and yet some of our house may suffer. God in the midst of judgment doth remember mercy; in the midst of mercy he remembers judgment. In the midst of judgment upon Sodom, he remembered mercy for Lot, and for his family; in the midst of mercy upon Lot, and upon his family, he remembered judgment upon Lot's wife. The same thing may be done by one in a way of faith, and he may live, and done by another in a way of unbelief, and "he may die.

Abraham looked upon Sodom when Sodom was a burning, Abraham got up early in the morning, verse 27, to the place where he stood before the Lord, and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up, as the smoke of a furnace." Abraham beheld, and looked upon it in the way of believing and lived: Lot's wife looks back in a way of unbelief, and she dies. The same thing may be done by one in a way of faith, and live, and by another in a way of unbelief, and die. But literally here, two shall be in one bed, the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left; two shall be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two in a bed, Lot and his wife, one taken, and the other left; two in a field, they were going both out of Sodom, one taken, and the other left; "Lord, how unsearchable are thy judgments, and thy ways past finding out."

If this story of Lot's wife be true, and do live in our memory, then here we may learn by way of instruction, and see how far a man or woman may go in religion, and yet come short at the last. Lot's wife went far, she was a professor of the first and the highest form, she had lived a long while in Abraham's family, she had walked with her husband Lot, and enjoyed his prayers many years; she stood out against the wickedness of Sodom while she was there; she was in some measure obedient unto the voice of the angel in going out of Sodom; and, as some observe, she was a professor of seventy years growth, and yet she miscarried. How far may men and women go in religion, and yet miscarry at the last?

If this story of Lot's wife be true, and do live in our memory; then you may learn and see by way of instruction; that the best relations will not secure from the hand of God, if we continue evil. She was the nearest relation of a holy, righteous man, Lot, yet sinned; her relation would not save her, and would not excuse her. Why should any say, I am the child of such a godly parent; I am the servant of such a godly master; I am a member of such a church: it is not the nearest and the best relations will save us from the hand of God, if we sin against him: here was the nearest relation, and yet not exempted from the the severest punishment.

If this story of Lot's wife be true, and do indeed live in our memory, then here you may see what an evil thing it is to look back upon that which God hath delivered us from. It is an evil thing to sin against that deliverance that hath a *such* written on it. In Ezra ix., see how he argues, "After all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespasses; seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us *such* deliverance as this," a deliverance with a *such* written on it, "should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? Wouldest not thou be angry with us, till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant, nor escaping?" See, it is a very evil thing for to sin after a deliverance that hath a *such* written upon it; but to turn back, or to look back unto that which God hath delivered us from, that is yet worse: for the Lord to have delivered us from superstition, from idolatry, and to look back to that which God hath delivered us from, what is this but after the manner of Lot's wife? But you see how it fared with her. Well then you see, it is an evil thing to look back to that which God hath delivered us from.

If this story of Lot's wife be true, and live in our memory; here we may learn by way of instruction, that former deliverance will not secure us from future destruction: she was delivered with a great deliverance, and yet destroyed with a great destruction. The like is said of the Israelites in the Epistle of Jude: "I will put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not:" delivered, and yet destroyed. We are apt to think, Oh, we have been delivered thus, and thus, and therefore we shall not be destroyed. God delivered them with a high hand, and they were destroyed with a high hand: Lot's wife delivered with a high hand, and destroyed with a high hand. Former deliverance will not secure us from future destruction.

If this story of Lot's wife be true, and live in our memory, then here we may learn by way of instruction: it is ill sinning when God is punishing; it is good begging while God is giving: but oh, it is ill sinning while God is punish-

ing. If he be angry, yea, but a little, blessed are all those that trust in him. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling: kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way." The way, what way? Why, in the way of his judgments. When God is fetching his stroke at a people, stand out of the way then of God's stroke. God was striking at Sodom, and Lot's wife came in the way of his stroke, and she died for it. It is ill sinning, when God is punishing.

If that this story be true, and live in your memory, then here you may learn, that those that are exemplary in sinning, shall be exemplary in punishing. She was the first that sinned this kind of sin, and the first that fell under such a judgment. The Lord marked Jeroboam, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that made Israel to sin; why? he was the first, and God set a mark upon him. This is that wicked Ahaz, that in the time of his affliction sinned yet more. What a mark did God set upon Judas, in his life, in his death! Why? he was the first that made a treacherous retreat from the gospel. He was the head of those halberteers that came to attach Christ. So an apostate usually doth head the persecuting party: but God set a mark upon him. Those that are first in sin, and those that are exemplary in sinning, God will make exemplary in punishment.

If this story of Lot's wife be true, and do live in our memory; then here we may see what an evil thing it is to mis-choose in our choosing time. Lot had two choices once; he had a choice before, when there was a difference between Abraham's servants and his. Abraham condescends and gives him his choice: Lot, thou art my younger, but I will yield for peace sake. (as we should all do for peace sake), but Lot, take thy choice. All the country was before him, and he chose Sodom, but God fired him out of that choice. Now he was to go out of Sodom, he and his wife and children were to go out of Sodom. And Lot, saith God, fly to the mountain. Not so, my Lord, there is little Zoar, let me go thither. And God let him have his choice, and yielded to him, but it cost him dear. What an evil thing is it to mis-choose in choosing times.

If this story of Lot's wife be true, and do live in our

memory; then here we may see by way of instruction, that though God will lay out an hiding place for his people, in times of public calamity; yet if they sin in the way, they may perish or miscarry in the very face of their hiding place. It appears that Lot had lost his wife before he came at Zoar. Gen. xix. 30. And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him. We do not read he lost her in Zoar, but in the way to Zoar. He would not go to the mountain that God chose for him, but to Zoar; now here in the way he sinned, and in the way to this hiding place he lost his wife. So that though God in time of public calamity, may indulge, or find out a hiding place for us; yet if we sin, we may perish even in the very way to our hiding place.

If this story of Lot's wife be true, and do live in our memory; then here we may learn by way of instruction, that it is possible that a religious family may have a black mark of God's indignation. Lot's family was a religious family. Never bear upon it that you are a religious family; it is possible that a religious family may have a black mark of God's indignation, and possibly the death of one relation may be a snare to the other. We know the sin that Lot committed afterwards with his daughters. The death of this relation a snare to the other; and God doth know how to strike at one through the sides of another. God strikes at Lot through the sides of his wife; God knows how to strike at one through the sides of another.

And the main of all is this. If the story of Lot's wife be true, and do live in our memory: oh, what an evil thing is it to look back, and to decline in declining times. How quick was God with Lot's wife for looking back. She never sinned this sin before; it was the first sin that ever in this kind she committed; and she might have said: Why, Lord, it is the first time that ever I committed it, and indeed I was taken before I was aware thus to look back: I did not consider well of what I did. But God turned her presently into a pillar of salt; God was quick with her. Why? For to shew thus much, God will be quick with apostates. God will turn the turners. She turned to look back, and God turned her into a pillar of salt. And so for those that turn, God will turn; God will turn turners; God will be quick with turners;

God will turn turners into a pillar of salt. God is quick with apostates and such as do decline. And thus I have given you these things by way of instruction.

As many I might give you in a way of caution, but to instance only in one.

If this story of Lot's wife be true, and do live in our remembrance; by way of caution, why should we not all take heed how we look back to worldly interests, in the day when the Son of man shall be revealed, or in this day of the gospel, when the Son of man is revealed. You see what became of Lot's wife for her looking back; and therefore why should we not all of us take heed how we look back or decline, in this day that the Son of man is revealed?

Sixthly, You will say, What shall we do that we may not decline; what shall we do that we may so remember Lot's wife, that we may not decline, or look back in declining times?

I shall not speak at large unto the argument; only thus:

If you would not look back in declining times, shut your eyes and your ears against all the allurements and threatenings of the world. For the devil he tempts much now in these days to false worship, as he tempted our Saviour Christ, when he said, "All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." That was false worship. So now the devil saith: All this living and preferment will I give thee, if thou wilt worship me so; this cupboard with plate will I give thee, this chamber hung with tapestry will I give thee, if thou wilt worship so; if thou wilt not worship, all this will I take from thee. Would you therefore be kept, that you may never look back? Shut your eyes, and shut your ears, go blindfold into God's commandments, as Abraham your father did.

If you would not look back in declining times, take heed of leaving any nest-egg in the day of reformation. If there be an egg left in the nest, sure enough the hen will return to the nest to lay yet. So in the time of reformation, if a nest-egg be left, as God knows what nest-eggs were left amongst us; but I say, if in a time of public reformation nest-eggs be left, there will be a return of the hen to the nest-egg there. Will you know what that good man said, Mr. Dering, before queen Elizabeth: The house is swept, and the dirt is behind the door; there comes a hen and scrapes it all

out again. But I put it into this: if a nest-egg be left, be it a public reformation or a private reformation; yet if a nest-egg be left, there will be a returning back again.

If you would not look back in declining times, then be sure that you never part friends with any sin. Some will part with their sin, but they will part friends with it. Saith one, By the grace of God I will never commit this sin again, and I will go but this time into this company, but after this time I will never go to them again; and so they part friends with their sin. Why, if a man be to part with his friend, he goes part of the way with him, and having parted friends, they look after one another. And so when a man parts friends with his sin, he will certainly look back again. But if a man would never look back to his sin in declining times, let him part as an enemy to it. He that will part friends with his sin, will certainly return to his sin again.

If you would not look back in declining times, be sure of this, that you do not run a share or a part in the vessel that God is about to destroy. Where my grief is, there is my finger; where my love is, there is my eye. If I have a share and a part in the vessel that God is about to destroy, I shall look after the vessel, what becomes thereof. Why now, Babylon, that art to be destroyed, Babylon is not to repent; Babylon that art to be destroyed, Babylon is not to be reformed. Wash dirt an hundred times, and you cannot make clean the dirt; Babylon is not to be reformed, but to be destroyed. Take heed therefore of running a part or a share in the boat or vessel that God hath laid out for destruction; for if you have a part and a share there, you will look back. But,

If you would not look back in declining times, let us consider, in the fear of the Lord, what an evil thing it is to look back. Briefly thus:

Thereby you lose all you have wrought, thereby you will lose all your losses. There is much gain in losing for Jesus Christ. There is gain in our losses. By looking back you will lose all your losses and the gain thereby.

Thereby you will lose the testimony of your own integrity. Yet, saith God, Job held fast his integrity. And if we do not look back in declining times, then our hearts will tell us we were upright before him; but if we look back in declining

times, our consciences will tell us we were never right before him.

Thereby, also, you will lose the comfort of those glorious times that are to come. Friends and beloved, glorious times there are a coming, that are at the back side of this hedge, that are but a little way off, that are on the back side of this affliction; glorious times that are a coming, and when they come, if ye stand and hold out, you will have the comfort of those glorious times. But if, now, you look back in the interim, you will lose the comfort of all those glorious times when they come, and come they will, and come they shall.

Thereby, also, you will and shall be satisfied with your own ways, for the backslider in heart shall be satisfied with his own ways; you will look back and you shall have enough of it, saith God.

And thereby, also, you will be made unmeet for the kingdom of heaven: for he that puts his hand to the plough, and looks back, is unfit for the kingdom of heaven.

And thereby, also, you may be made a pillar of salt, and an example unto after ages; for God is quick with apostates and with them that do look back. You have heard how quick the Lord was with Lot's wife, and she was but a type. Now, therefore, as ever you do desire, friends and beloved; as ever you do desire that you may not lose what you have wrought for, so many years; as you do desire that you may hold fast and not lose the gain of your former losses; as you do desire that you may hold fast your integrity; as you do desire that you may have the comfort of those glorious times that are a coming; as you do desire you may not be satisfied with your own ways; and as you do desire you may not be unfit for the kingdom of heaven; and as you do desire that you may not be made examples for after ages: I beseech you, in the name of the Lord, and I desire this exhortation may take upon my own heart as well as yours: let us remember Lot's wife. It was the Lady Jane's speech to Harding, that apostate: Harding, Harding, remember Judas; Harding, remember Francis Spira: and let us remember Lot's wife.

And if you will ask, How should we so remember Lot's wife that we may not decline in declining times? Work these things upon your hearts; this story and example upon your hearts. Take this for a constant rule, that passion is the best

door-keeper of memory. The more I am affected with a thing for the present, the more I shall remember it for the future; and therefore if you would remember Lot's wife, go and work this story now upon your own hearts; and as the times are declining, the more declining the times are, the more do you rub your memory with this example of Lot's wife, and call upon yourselves: Come, oh, my soul, remember Lot's wife. Brethren, friends, beloved, our Saviour Christ hath left you this example, he hath commanded you and me to remember Lot's wife. It is an example that he hath sanctified, that we may take heed hereby; and therefore at all times call upon yourselves and your own souls: Come, oh, my soul, hast thou forgotten Lot's wife? Thou beginnest to grow cold and dead and dull, hast thou forgotten Lot's wife? Come, oh, my soul, remember Lot's wife. Thus shall you be able to stand, and not to look back, and I pray think upon it, that we may not be of the number of those that draw back unto perdition, but of those that do believe to the saving of our souls. Think, therefore, of these things, and remember Lot's wife.

END OF VOL. III.