

be an enemy to faith, faith is a friend to sense; especially sense of sin, and sense of the church's miseries. The more you look upon the fulness, and the freeness, and the certainty of the promise of deliverance, the more your faith will be strengthened. Now this promise of deliverance here, is full, is free, it is large, it is repeated again and again; in Micah iv. you have the same promise, and it is there repeated again and again.

Why then should you say not thus? Well, through the grace of God, though I be sensible of the reproach of the solemn assembly, yet I will believe for deliverance, and though I do believe for deliverance, yet I will be sensible through grace, of the reproach of the solemn assembly. Do so; only let your faith be the mother unto this sense; therefore take this promise, read it over, work it, chafe it upon your hearts much when you are alone. I conclude reading it: saith the Lord here, "I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burthen: Behold, at that time, I will undo all that afflict thee, and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out: And I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame: At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you, for I will make you a name, and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord."

SERMON VIII.

THE EVIL OF UNBELIEF IN DEPARTING FROM GOD.

"Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." HEB. iii. 12.

IN these words three things are the most considerable.

A great disease that christians are subject to, to depart from God.

The cause of that disease, an evil heart of unbelief.

The cure of that disease or the remedy against it; and

that is, watchfulness, or taking heed. "Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

The disease is great indeed, a disease common unto the children of men to depart from God.

And the disease is very dangerous; for else, why should we take heed thereof? I shall speak something to all these, and not so much as to single out any doctrine: But thus from the first.

It is a very dangerous thing to depart from God.

When may a man be said to depart from God, or a people be said to depart from God; and what is the danger of it?

For answer, There is a total departing from God, and a partial departing from God; every sin that we do commit is a departing from God. For what is sin, but an avertency from the Creator, and a convertency to the creature.

A total departure there is, and that is two-fold, either total in regard of the object, or total in regard of the subject.

A man doth totally depart from God objective, when he doth depart from all the truths and ways of God, and turns heathen.

But subjective, a man doth totally depart from God, when he doth with his own heart and soul depart from the Lord, though he may keep many truths; as a man that breaks in his outward estate, he may keep something and yet be broken; so spiritually, a man may break and depart from God, and yet may keep many truths. Now it is this totally departing that is here aimed at; and it is a dangerous thing, either totally or partially; but especially a dangerous thing to depart from the Lord totally.

Now that is the question: When may a man be said to depart from God?

Look when a man doth depart from the service and the worship of God, then he departs from God. In Isa. lxxv. 11, "But ye are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain." When men do forget the holy mountain, the worship and service of God, and depart from that, then they depart from and forsake the Lord. And

Look when a man doth depart from an holy conversation wherein he hath walked before, then he is said to depart from

God, Job vi. 14. But he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty. "To him that is afflicted, pity should be shewed from his friend, but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty:" it is not said, "he forsakes the Almighty," but he forsakes the fear of the Almighty, which is all one: when a man doth forsake the fear of the Almighty, the good ways of God, a holy and a good conversation wherein he hath walked before, then he is said to depart from God: and

Look when a man in time of danger and trouble doth not so much trust unto the Lord, as unto an arm of flesh for safety and deliverance, then he is said to depart from God, Jer. xvii. 5. Thus saith the Lord, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." For a man in time of trouble to rest upon an arm of flesh, and not upon the Lord himself, why, this is to depart from God in scripture language.

Now it is a dangerous thing so to do.

For thereby a man doth depart from his life, in departing from God, he doth depart from his own life: for God is a living God, saith the text here: take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God: departing from God, then a man doth depart from his life: take away God and I am nobody, saith one: a true speech, take away the living God, and where is our life?

Thereby also a man doth depart from his own prosperity, 2 Chron. xxvi. 5. It is said of Uzziah, "As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper." Departing then from the Lord, is a departing from a man's own prosperity.

Thereby also in departing from God, a man doth depart from his refuge and shelter in the time of adversity: as he doth depart from his own prosperity, so by departing from God, a man doth depart from his shelter, and covert, and sanctuary in the time of adversity. You know what God hath said, "I will be a little sanctuary unto you:" in the want of a sanctuary, God will be a sanctuary to his people, "Fear not their fear, nor be afraid, sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, and he shall be for a sanctuary unto you." A hiding place, a shelter in the time of a storm When a man departs from

God, then he departs from his sanctuary, from his relief and shelter in the day of his adversity.

Thereby also a man doth depart from his own comfort; from all his comforts: take away the sun, and it is not all the torches in the land can make a day, or can give daylight: God is the Father of mercy, and the God of all consolation; depart therefore from the Lord, and we depart from all our consolation, we depart from all our comfort.

Thereby also in departing from the Lord, a man doth depart from his own being, and his own mercy: forsakes his own mercies, and cleaves unto lying vanities. The name of God you know is, I am, I am that I am: who is all-sufficient? I am, saith God: who is gracious? I am, saith God. The name of God is, I am, the name of the creature is, I am not: in departing therefore from the Lord, a man doth depart from his own being: in him we live, and move, and have our being, departing from the Lord, we depart from all: surely it is a very dangerous thing then to depart from God.

Now the cause of this disease is unbelief: unbelief is the root of apostacy, infidelity is the ground of apostacy, an unbelieving heart is the cause of this departing from God.

Here are two things:

That an unbelieving heart, is an evil heart.

That unbelief is the cause and root of this apostacy, or departing from God.

I shall clear it by several particulars, and but name them.

An unbelieving heart is an evil heart, for it is a hard heart; and therefore you have it in the following words, "Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin:" what is a hard heart? we are generally mistaken about a hard heart; we think ordinarily that when a man's heart is straitened in duty, then his heart is hard: no, a man may be straitened in duty, and yet his heart may be soft: but a thing is said to be hard when it does not yield: soft when it doth yield. Touch hard wax and it yields not, touch soft wax and it yields, and takes the impression: a soft heart yields unto God's impressions; a hard heart yields not, but resists and contradicts: so doth an unbelieving heart: an unbelieving heart is a contradicting, resisting, an unyielding heart; and therefore properly an unbelieving heart is a hard heart.

As an unbelieving heart is a hard heart, so an unbelieving heart is an unclean heart: for faith purifies the heart, and therefore where the heart is unbelieving, the heart is unpurified, and so is unclean: an unbelieving heart is an unclean heart.

As an unbelieving heart is an unclean heart, so it is a proud heart. You know what the prophet Habakkuk saith, chap. ii., "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, but the just shall live by faith:" so then, an unbelieving heart also is a proud heart.

As an unbelieving heart is a proud heart, so it is a froward, peevish, fretful heart: faith and fretting are opposed, in Psa. xxxvii., "Fret not thyself because of evil doers, trust in the Lord, and do good: commit thy way unto him, and trust in him," verse 5. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him, fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way," verse 7. Faith and fretting are opposed. How did the people of Israel murmur in the wilderness; and why, but because of their unbelief? Froward, and fretful, and murmuring. An unbelieving heart is a fretting froward heart.

As it is a fretting and froward heart, so an unbelieving heart is a rash, foolish heart, and will put one upon doing foolish things. It is rash, faith makes not haste, but unbelief makes haste, "I said in my haste, I am cast out of thy sight:" that is unbelief, "I said in my haste, all men are liars," that is unbelief. What a foolish thing it was for David to scrabble on the door, and let fall his spittle, and feign himself mad? It was his unbelief that did it: an unbelieving heart, is a rash, sudden, and a foolish heart.

As it is a rash and a foolish heart, so it is a doubting, wavering, staggering heart. It is said of Abraham, that he staggered not through unbelief. It seems then, that as drunkenness will make a man stagger, and reel to and fro, so unbelief will make a man stagger and reel to and fro: a doubting, wavering, unsettled, staggering heart, is an unbelieving heart.

As it is a doubting, staggering heart, so it is an undutiful, and an unserviceable heart: for it is faith that is the great performer of duties. What is duty but faith incarnate? what are works but faith incarnate? Faith is a friend to prayer, and prayer is a friend to faith. You may see how they are

twisted together, and one walks by another. In Psalm iii., David being in very great distress, he believes, verse 3., "But thou O Lord art a shield for me, my glory, and the lifter up of mine head:" why then he prays, verse 4., "I cried unto the Lord with my voice;" then he believes, verse 5., "I laid me down and slept," verse 6., "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about:" then he prays at verse 7., "Arise O Lord, save me, O my God:" he prays, and he believes, and he believes, and he prays. Prayer is a friend to faith, and faith is a friend to prayer: but an unbelieving heart, is an undutiful heart, an unserviceable heart, it is an unpraying heart.

As an unbelieving heart is an undutiful heart, and an unserviceable heart: so it is a sad, and a discouraged heart. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou so disquieted within me? Hope, wait, trust in the Lord;" and that is the way to take off discouragements: but a heart full of unbelief, is a heart full of discouragement.

As it is a sad and disconsolate heart, so an unbelieving heart is a dishonouring heart: by faith we honour the power of God, the grace of God, the all-sufficiency of God: "He that believeth not, makes God a liar," saith the apostle, that God is not faithful: faith honours the faithfulness of God, but he that believeth not makes God a liar: it is a God-dishonouring sin.

And to say no more in it but this: as it is a God-dishonouring sin, so an unbelieving heart is the heart that God will punish with the most severity: we may see how the Lord punished it in his own people, when they were in the wilderness, and they sinned through unbelief. God kept them out of the land of promise; and why? Heb. iii. 19., "So we see that they could not enter in, because of unbelief:" this was in their first time; but now in their last time, they were broken off. And how came they to be broken off in Christ's time, Rom. xi. 20. "Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith:" because of unbelief they were kept out of Canaan; because of unbelief they were broken off in Christ's time; so that an unbelieving heart, and an unbelieving soul, is such an heart, and such a soul as God will punish with the most severity; "He that believeth not is condemned already:" an unbelieving heart is an evil heart.

But now this unbelieving heart or infidelity, is the ground of apostacy, for thereby we depart from God: infidelity is the root of apostacy; for as by faith we are united to God, do draw near to God, and are united to him: so by our unbelief we depart from God. Faith, you know, is the uniting grace; and so on the contrary, by unbelief we depart from God: but this will appear if you consider what those things are that make men depart from God.

They are the good things, and the evil things of this life.

The good things of this life do flatter men from God.

The evil things of this life, scare men from God. Now faith will preserve from both.

If a man be tempted with the good things of this life, yet if he have faith, he will not depart from God, for by faith we live upon God in the use of the good things.

And if a man be tempted to depart from God by the evil things of this life, yet if he have but faith, he will not depart from God; for by faith we live upon God, and live above losses, and above crosses; so that faith doth preserve us from both: and therefore unbelief is the root and ground of all our apostasy, or declining from God. And we know how it was with the three children, what it was that kept them in that evil day; there was the music on the one hand, and the fiery furnace on the other; but between both, they were kept and preserved, for they believed. It was their faith kept them from departing.

But further, If that unbelief be a mother sin, a parent sin, a breeding sin, the root and cause of other sins; why then unbelief must needs be the root, and ground, and cause of apostacy. Why now, what is the cause of all our sins but our unbelief? People do not think so. What is the reason that men are so covetous and worldly but because of their unbelief? What is the reason when people are in trouble that they use indirect means to get out of trouble, but because of their unbelief? What is the reason that a servant or a child will tell lies? Because of unbelief. Unbelief is the mother sin, the parent sin, the breeding sin; and therefore unbelief is the cause of departing and going off from God.

And if so, why should we not all then take heed of an evil heart of unbelief? That is the remedy that is here

prescribed for the cure of this disease: Take heed, brethren, take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.

Take heed :

What should we take heed of?

Take heed of departing from God, and take heed of unbelief, and of an evil heart of unbelief, whereby we depart from God.

Take heed of departing from God; for as we have heard already, it is a very dangerous thing to depart from God. Let me add this :

If we depart from God, who will receive us? If a proclamation be out against a man as a traitor, who durst receive him? And if a man do depart from the Lord, what creature dare receive him? In John ii., speaking of some that departed from the Lord: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ; if there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." The king's proclamation is out against him, take heed how you receive him; here is a command sent from the Lord to take heed how you receive such an one; I say, if we depart from God, who will receive us?

And if you depart from God, you will hardly ever return unto him again; you know the place, it is impossible we should be renewed by repentance; faith is *but once* delivered to the saints. If the leaves be off in the winter, the tree will grow again; but if it be plucked up by the roots, it will grow no more. "Twice dead," saith the apostle: dead by the law; but if a man depart from God under the gospel, he is twice dead; now a man that is twice dead, certainly he will never recover; twice dead, how twice dead? Not that a man was twice alive. A man is hanged, and so is dead; after he is hanged, he is quartered, here is a second death; he is twice dead, not that he had a life between these two deaths, between his hanging and his quartering, but he is twice dead: so a man that departs from God under the gospel, he is twice dead; he was alive once in the state of innocence, but he lost it, and now he is dead by the gospel, and cut asunder by the gospel; he is twice dead, and will hardly ever return to God again. A man that lives under the gos-

pel, and departs from God, a thousand to one if ever he return to God again.

And if we do depart from God, God will depart from us. God is with us while we are with him, but if we forsake the Lord, he will forsake us; if we depart from God, God will depart from us; God comes first to us, but we go first from him; God doth not leave any, but those that leave him first; he comes to us before we come to him, but if we depart from him, he will depart from us; and if God go, the devil comes; the Lord rejected Saul, and an evil spirit came presently upon him: therefore who would not take heed of departing from God? But

As we are to take heed of departing from God, so we are to take heed of unbelief, and of an unbelieving heart, whereby we depart from God; for the sin of unbelief, and an unbelieving heart is very cunning and makes a deceitful heart. Therefore, saith the apostle in the words following; "Lest ye be hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin." It hath very many pretences and fair colours. When they were invited by the gospel, what excuses had they, all from unbelief? I have married a wife, and I cannot come; and I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go see it, I pray thee have me excused; and I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them, I pray thee have me excused. No, no, I have unbelief in my heart, and I cannot come; unbelief made all these excuses, it is a cunning heart, a deceiving sin, the sin of unbelief.

And indeed it is such a sin as hardens insensibly, that we cannot perceive. You can see the tree, the body of the tree, and the bark of the tree, and the boughs of the tree, and the leaves of the tree, but you cannot see the root of the tree. Unbelief is a root sin, and that is least perceived. Now when one hath to deal with a deceitful enemy, that is least perceived, had he not need take heed? Take heed of departing from God through an evil heart of unbelief.

The question then is, what shall we do? These are declining and departing times, wherein many do and will depart from God; make account of it! what shall we do that we may not depart from God through unbelief? What shall we do, that we may take heed of an unbelieving heart, that we may take heed of departing from God? I put

them together into one question. Now I shall give several directions here, and so wind up.

If you would not depart from God through unbelief, in declining and departing times, be sure that you keep close unto the word of God, unto his appointments; and take heed how you meddle with any appointments that are like to his; for the more you depart from the word, the more you depart from God, and the more you meddle with appointments that are like to God's, the more you depart from the word. Look into Exod. xxx., and see what a commandment there is not to meddle with any thing that is like to God's appointments; at the 23rd verse, there is direction concerning the holy ointment: "Take thou, also, unto thee principal spices; of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, and of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin." Then at the 25th verse, "Thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil." Well, at the 33rd verse, "Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people." You shall make none like it. At the 34th verse you have directions for the making of an holy perfume: "The Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices, with pure frankincense, of each shall there be a like weight. And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy." But then at the 38th verse, "Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people." A dangerous thing it is to meddle with the appointments in the worship and service of God, that are like to God's appointments: for any man, like an apothecary and a confectioner, in the worship and service of God, to make appointments in God's worship like unto the appointments of God; it is a dangerous thing, he shall be cut off from his people. Therefore if you would not depart from God through unbelief, keep close to the word and the appointments thereof, and take heed of meddling with any appointments that are like thereto.

If you would not depart from God through unbelief, take heed that you do not suffer any thing to come between your heart and God's commandment or promise. We all fell in Adam through unbelief. How came that about? Why, the devil got between Adam's heart and the commandment. Adam did not keep the commandment close, there was something (a devil's promise) that got between his heart and God's commandment, and so he departed from God. Take heed, therefore, and be sure that nothing come between your heart and God's commandment.

If you would not depart from God, the living God, through unbelief, take heed of venturing upon any sin because it is small, yielding to any error because it is little, leaving any truth because it is but little or small. There are some passage truths, as I may call them; in time of war, when one army is against another, you shall see how earnestly they will contend for a little passage, a little spot of ground; ask them the reason, Ob, that is a passage: so there are some truths that are but small in themselves, and they are passage truths; and if you would not depart from God and the great truths, look to passage truths, look to keep your passages.

If you would not depart from God, the living God, through unbelief, be sure that you lay all your work in sincerity, for the ground that had not root in itself falls away. Take this for a certain rule: he that begins in hypocrisy, will end in apostacy. Here are some it may be, though but few of us, that are beginning and laying the foundation; look to your foundation that it be laid well in sincerity, for if your foundation be laid in hypocrisy, you will end in apostacy.

If you would not depart from the Lord through an unbelieving heart, take heed of strangeness with God, want of communion in private. Enmity begins in strangeness among men. First people grow strange, and then they come to hate one another, and to be enemies to one another. Enmity begins with strangeness: and truly so it is with God; first strangeness and then enemies. If you would not depart from God, the living God, oh, take heed of strangeness with God, maintain your private communion.

Take heed of taking offence and of being offended at any of the good ways of God, or any of the people of God. It was Dr. Preston's usual saying, I never knew any one decline

or fall away, but first he took offence at some good man, and then he took offence at more good men, and then he took offence at the ways of God themselves. And you know it is said of the disciples, They were offended and went back: and of the false ground, By and by he is offended; he doth not say, By and by they fall away. Why? Because usually falling away and departing begins at being offended. Therefore would you not depart from the living God, then take heed you take no offence at the good ways of God, or the people of God.

Take heed of walking alone; for you see what follows in the text, saith he, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, but exhort one another daily." So that the only way to be kept from departing from the living God, is to be exhorting one another. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." In evil days exhort one another daily, in declining times take heed of walking alone.

Take heed of remissness in duty: remissness in duty will cause omission of duty, omission of duty will cause commission of evil, and commission of evil will cause a departing from God. I used to say, The slumber of grace is a preparation to sin; and those that slumber in times of enjoyments, they will fall in suffering times, it is likely. You know how it was with the disciples that slumbered and slept at the mount of transfiguration, afterwards they slept also in suffering time. Well, therefore, if you would not depart from God, the living God, through unbelief, take heed of the slumbers of grace, take heed of remissness in any duty, lest remissness cause omission, omission commission, and commission departing from God.

Take heed that you do not stand poring upon your temptations, whatsoever your temptations be. When the children of Israel were stung by the serpents in the wilderness, they did not stand poring upon the arm that was stung, and crying out, Oh, my arm! oh, how it is swelled! but they looked up upon the brazen serpent. If they had looked upon their arm, and stood poring upon that, they had never been cured. So now, if in case we be tempted, the way is, not to stand poring upon the temptation, but to look off unto Christ. If, therefore, you would not depart from God in the time of

temptation, take heed of poring upon the temptation, look off from that upon the brazen serpent. And

Set the Lord always before your eyes, his all-sufficiency, his fulness, his grace, his goodness: I have set the Lord always before me, at my right hand, saith David, and therefore I shall not fall: so do you.

Possess your hearts much with the fear of God: fear is the preserver of innocency: "I will put my fear into your hearts, saith God, that you shall not depart from me:" if then you would not depart from God, labour to possess your souls with the fear of God.

Take heed how you consult with flesh and blood in the things of God. If Paul had consulted with flesh and blood, he had never believed. And if in the things of God we consult with flesh and blood, we are sure to depart from God, the living God.

Put yourselves often unto this disjunction. Come, O my soul, either there is enough in God alone, or there is not: if there be not enough in God alone, how do they live in heaven? They have no meat, no drink, no clothes, no gold nor silver: as the martyr said, I am going to that country where your gold and silver will not go; when they offered him gold and silver; alas, our gold and silver doth not go there; as leather money will not go here where gold and silver goes: so our gold and silver will not go there: if there be not enough in God alone, how do you think they live in heaven? Surely they live upon God. Therefore there is enough in God: well, if there be enough in God alone, O my soul, why should I depart from God? All departure doth signify an insufficiency. I leave this house, and go to another, because this house is not sufficient. When I am sick I send to my neighbour for beer, why? because my beer do not like me. The bee leaves one flower, and goes to another, because it doth not find enough in that flower: all departing notes an insufficiency. If I depart from God, it notes an insufficiency in God. Is it not because there is no God in Israel that ye are gone down to Baal-zephon? Well, either there is enough in God alone, O my soul, or there is not. If there be not enough in God alone, then how do they live in heaven? If there be enough in God alone, then why should I depart from God through unbelief? Thus put yourselves upon this

dilemma, and it will be a means to keep you from departing from God through your unbelief.

If you would not depart from God, the living God, through unbelief, then take heed of worldliness. Take heed of covetousness and of worldliness. We cannot serve two masters, God and mammon; you must cleave to the one and forsake the other: Demas hath forsaken me and embraced this present world. A worldly covetous heart will depart from God, and therefore take heed of covetousness, worldliness. Seek not great things for yourselves. Seek ye great things in these times? Seek them not; it is a great matter to have one's life for a prey in evil times.

If you would not depart from God, the living God, through unbelief, then take heed of misbelief; all unbelief is grounded upon a misbelief. We do not believe because we misbelieve. We see it in Adam, he was guilty of unbelief. How? Why he believed the devil. "You shall be like God," said he: and by his misbelieving he came into unbelief. His unbelief was grounded upon a misbelief. God draws by promises and the devil tempts by promises. Why, when the devil tempts by promises, if we believe his promises we shall soon be guilty of unbelief in regard of God's promises; and therefore if we would not depart from God, the living God, through unbelief, take heed of misbelieving.

If you would not depart from God through unbelief, then look to your judgment in reference to your conversation, and look to your conversation in reference to your judgment; look to your life in reference to your opinion, look to your opinion in reference to your life. Faith and a good opinion doth preserve a good life, a good life doth preserve faith and a good opinion. Faith lies in the bosom of a good conversation. Faith is best preserved by a good conversation, and a good conversation is best preserved by faith. Sometimes men do depart from God, and their departure begins above in the judgment, and like rheum it falls down upon the lungs, it falls down upon the conversation. Sometimes the departing begins below in the conversation, and steams up into the judgment, as some things that are unsavoury in the stomach, they steam up into the head. Sometimes the departure from God begins above, and works downward into the conversation; sometimes it begins below in the conversation, and works upwards into the judg-

ment. Therefore look to your judgments in reference to your conversation, and look to your conversation in reference to your judgment. Look to your faith in reference to your life, and look to your life in reference to your faith.

If you would not depart from God, the living God, through unbelief, then take heed how you run with the times. Good friends, there is the truth of the times and there is the error of the times; there is the grace of the times and there is the sin of the times; seldom that the generality of people hit it, they seldom hit the truth of the times, seldom hit the grace of the times. I say, the generality of people seldom hit it, they are like the dead fish that swims down the water, the living fish swims against the tide; and so the living christian swims against the tide of the times. Take heed, if you would not depart from the living God through unbelief, take heed how you fall with the times, for, I say, seldom do the generality of people hit the truth, or the grace of the times.

Know that it is the greatest honour, possess your souls on it, that may be to wait upon the Lord, and the greatest dishonour to depart from God through unbelief; thereby a man proclaims his own folly; thereby he doth put himself out of God's protection; thereby he casts dirt and reproach in the very face of God: Is it not because there is no God in Israel, that ye go down to Baal-zebub the God of Ekron? God will cast dirt and reproach in their faces, that cast dirt and reproach in his face: it is the greatest honour to wait upon the Lord; it is the greatest dishonour to depart from God.

Be very sensible of your own unbelieving heart, and of all your former departings from God: the best way to keep from new sins, is to be very sensible of old sins; he that is very sensible of his former sins, shall through the grace of God be kept from new sins: have you departed from the Lord, be sensible of your departings from God, be sensible of your own unbelieving heart: there is many that go up and down, and are never sensible of their own unbelieving hearts, twenty thirty, forty years they have lived, and yet not sensible of their unbelieving heart, though it is the greatest evil: well, if you be sensible of your unbelief, and former departings from God, then you shall be kept from departing from the Lord through unbelief.

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: