

## SERMON XIII.

ON ZECHARIAH I. 18—21, II. 1.

PREACHED BEFORE THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS, AT THEIR  
PUBLIC FAST, NOVEMBER 29, 1643.

“Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked, and they see his shame,” Rev. xvi. 15.

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TO THE HONOURABLE THE KNIGHTS, CITIZENS AND BURGESSES OF THE  
COMMONS HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT.

RIGHT WORTHY SENATORS.—According unto your command I have presented these notes unto your hands and the world’s view; give me leave, withal, to present my humble thankfulness for your unwearied labour of love to these three kingdoms, and in them unto all the churches of Christ; for as once the Poles’ ambassador said in regard of the Turk, *Per latus Poloniae petunt Europam*, I may say in regard of your and our enemies, through the sides of England, Scotland and Ireland, they strike at all that is truly called christendom, your wisdom therefore doth well to make good these passages.

It is true, indeed, your work is great, but it is for the great God; and Solomon saith, “The house that I build is great, for great is our God,” 2 Chron. ii. 5. Shall not we do great things for him who hath done and suffered great things for us and by us? “Sicut calere contra frigidum hoc est repugnare frigido, virtutis est atque vigoris, sic amareet appetere insuavo sive molestum,” &c.—Parisians de Fide.

Your work is clogged with many difficulties; but if it were not so, how should the strength of your love appear either to your God or to your country? A man may be said to love the truth before the wind of opposition riseth, but he cannot be said to hold it fast, or cleave unto it, till he meets with some that would take it from him, Deut. xiii. 1—4. Difficulty doth commend duty: there was a stone rolled upon Christ’s grave, and there is a difficulty rolled upon every truth or way of God which through the evil of the times hath been buried; but when you come to the grave’s mouth, the place where you think to meet with most difficulty, there and then the stone shall be rolled away. “Operum difficultates caelorum suavitates consequuntur.” The more difficulty in doing, the more sweetness in the work done.

Your work is berounded with many dangers, but the neglect of it is more dangerous, and the frown of a prince may sometimes stand with the favour of God; “Nec mendacii utilitas est diuturna, nec veritatis damnum diu nocet:” neither shall flattery always hold in credit, nor truth ever continue in disgrace.

Your work is reproached sometimes, and calumniated by divers adversaries: but as Seneca said to his friend, *Male de te loquuntur homines, sed mali*; so may I say to you, Men speak evil of you, but they are evil men, and it may be, yea it is likely God will hear the language of your Peninahs, and make you the more fruitful, especially you doing as Hannah did, who though she was willing to answer to the charge of Eli, because he did speak from zeal, yet she would not an-

swer the reproach of Peninah because she spoke from hatred. “Cur respondet sacerdoti, sed Peninnæ non respondeat Anna? quia Peninna erat persona privata, sacerdos autem publica: item Peninna loquebatur ex odio, sacerdos ex zelo: unde illud negligendum erat, ille instruendus.”—Mend. in Sam. Surely malignant clamours are best answered when neglected. *Tutius aliquando agit qui calumnias non exaudet.* Jesus Christ was eclipsed that God’s servants might shine.

Your work, also, is or may be disadvantageous unto your own particular interests, your public employments cannot but hinder your private affairs, yet be pleased to remember Moses and Joshua, who were men of great service in their generation, having as full an opportunity to have made themselves rich as ever men had, yet we do not read of any great lot they shared out to themselves or their posterity. You are now employed upon God’s service; as for your own private affairs, if you afford them some relics of your love, and so much only as the public leaves, it is enough; for what is too cold for God is hot enough for the world; yet as the baggage unto an army, so are things temporal to spiritual, and personal estates to public employments. “Toleramus potius præsentia quam diligamus.”—Augustin.

And in the throng of all your discouragements, be pleased also to remember how good, how honourable, how successful your service is and will be.

It is good, first, in regard of the State; for you are now in travail for your country’s liberty, which though it may stick some time in the birth, and a dragon stand before you to devour it before it is born, yet in due time it shall be brought forth, and we shall not only be *liberati*, but *liberi*. The Hebrews have a proverb which they have borrowed of Solomon, פֶּרַעַנְרָר יִשְׁכְּנוּ הַנְּחוּשׁ, that whoso breaketh down the hedge shall be bitten with serpents. The hedges of the State or Church are the laws, as Drusius interprets it: “Qui diruit maceriam, eum mordebit serpens; qui legum constitutiones impingit, non feret impune; qui religionis sacra violat, non erit a pæna immunis:” or the ordinances thereof. Those enemies of yours or ours, that have or would tread down our hedges even to the ground, shall not ever go unpunished. When the hedge is lowest the serpent is nearest.

Good, again, in regard of the churches; for through your pains and labour of love, those swelling parts, I had almost said wens, which engrossed all the outward nutriment unto themselves, the direful presage of a people’s death and ruin, are either taken off or made more proportionable. “Ut videmus in corpore humano (cui apostolus in pluribus epistolarum suarum passibus comparat) quod si nutrimentum luit ad unum membrum, ita ut enormiter ingrossetur et alia nimia attenuatione demacerentur non potest diu vivere; sic in corpora eccles. si superiores fiant ita graves attractione substantiæ quod inferiores vix possunt præ inopia se sustinere, hoc est signum jam propinquæ ruinæ.”—Gerson.

Your service is very honourable; for what greater honour than under Jesus Christ to be your country’s saviours and your Lord’s servants? Upon Moses’s death, it was said, Moses, the servant of the Lord, is dead; not Moses, the prince of the people, but the servant of the Lord. So Psalm xviii., in the title of the Psalm, it is said, “A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord;” not, A Psalm of David, the anointed king of Israel, but, as if it were more honour to be God’s servant than Israel’s king, it is said, the servant of the Lord: such honour have all our worthies.

Your service is and will be most successful; it is truth you stand for; and though the truth may labour, as Hierom speaks, it cannot be overcome: “Veritas laborare potest, vinci non potest.” For what, saith Mendoza, is more

impregnable than the heavens? and truth hath built itself a tower there. “ Quid enim cœlo inexpugnabilius? veritas arcem in cœlo collocavit,” Ps. cxix. “ Thy word, O Lord, is settled in the heavens,” Ps. cxix. Wherefore, worthy Sirs, as heretofore, so now much more be always abounding in the work of the Lord, in due time you shall reap if you faint not. If you want money to carry on your (yet not your, but God’s) public design, remember what was promised unto Cyrus, who in regard of rebuilding the temple, was to do your work in the type. “ I will go before thee, saith God, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron, and will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places,” Isa. xlv. 2, 3. And doth not your own experience tell you, thus, even thus hath our God dealt by us; for the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places have been brought forth unto us; gold and silver that hath not seen the light for many years before. God is the same God still, and his promise, which is your mint, the same.

If you want outward strength and power, then remember how often, when the Jews were to build the temple, and therein to meet with enemies, the Lord inculcates that his attribute upon them, the Lord of Hosts: “ Thus saith the Lord of Hosts,” thrice in one verse, Zech. xv. 3; and five times in four short verses, Hag. ii. “ Silver is mine, and gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts; I will fill this house with my glory, saith the Lord of Hosts,” &c.

And if you find not the hearts of the people coming up always to your forwardness, then your wisdom knoweth how to improve the beats of their hearts while they last. All things, you know, are easy and beautiful in their season; and because men know not time and judgment, therefore their misery is great upon them.

But, above all things, let your eye be upon that most which God’s eye is most upon, truth, reformation, and pure religion. State hypocrites desire truth for peace sake, godly statesmen desire peace for truth’s sake; war is for peace, but peace for truth: wherefore that I may serve you herein, I take the boldness to lay these few lines before you.

The sermon calleth for exactness of reformation. If I have not been exact, whilst I have called for exactness, your goodness knoweth as well how to connive at what is mine, as to embrace what is God’s. Go on, right worthy patriots, still to defend your country, to contend for truth, to be willing to lose and be lost for Christ. Whilst I live, I shall live praying for you, and when I die, I hope I shall die praising God for you.

Your humble servant in the gospel of Jesus Christ,

WILLIAM BRIDGE.

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ZECHARIAH I. 18—21, II. 1.

“ 18. *Then lift I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns.*

“ 19. *And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.*

“ 20. *And the Lord shewed me four carpenters.*

“ 21. *Then said I, What come these to dô? and he spake, saying,*

*These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the gentiles, which lift up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.*

“ 1. *I lift up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring-line in his hand.*”

ALTHOUGH, according to the English translation, these words are parts of several chapters, yet in many Hebrew copies the iind chapter begins where my text doth, and they have such connection that I may not part them.

Three things there are which this age of ours hath brought forth: malignant enemies; special instruments of their ruin; and great endeavours for reformation. Accordingly here are three visions: a vision of “four horns,” verses 18, 19; a vision of “four carpenters,” verses 20, 21; a vision of “a man with a measuring-line in his hand,” ii. 1.

Every vision hath its narration and explication.

The narration of the first vision is at the 18th verse, “I saw, and behold four horns:” the explication in the 19th verse, “These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.” So that

You have the description of the church’s enemies under the vision of four horns, who are here described, 1. From their number or multitude; they are four horns according to the four parts of the world: *Quatuor cornua sunt quatuor mundi partes.* 2. From their power and strength: the horn is a word that in scripture phrase doth note strength: “He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us,” Luke i. 69; that is, strong and powerful salvation. 3. From their mischievous and malignant practice: “They scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.”

In the second vision you have the description of those special instruments that are raised up for their destruction, under the similitude of four carpenters, or four smiths; who are here described, 1. From their number: four. And, 2. From their work, which is to scatter the horns, and to cast out the gentiles.

Then cometh in the third vision, the endeavours for reformation, under the similitude of “a man with a measuring line in his hand;” which is described two ways: 1. From the instrument thereof, a man, or, as in the Hebrew, *וְיָס*, an ex-

cellent man, explained to be Zerubbabel their governor, chap. iv. 10. 2. From the exactness thereof; he doth work by line: "I saw a man with a measuring line in his hand."

Give me leave to open the words and draw out some short observations upon them before I come to the main truths.

"Then lift I up mine eyes and saw," verse 18. That is, I stirred and roused up myself with all intenseness to receive this vision. Heavenly revelations are not to be obtained in a drowsy and sleepy way.

"And behold four horns." That is, enemies from all parts of the world, and especially those four monarchies who have all in their course and turn been vexatious to the people of God. It is no new thing for the saints and churches to be pushed, gored, scattered by cruel and beastly enemies. Yea the churches may be so afflicted with enemies, that a man shall not know whither to fly for safety, for in every part of the world there shall be some opposers: "I saw four horns," misery and calamity and persecution arising out of every part.

"And I said to the angel that talked with me," &c., verse 19. This angel by interpreters is said to be Christ himself, the angel of the covenant, who is the best interpreter of heavenly visions and of hard scriptures. When we understand them not, we should search, make inquiry, and go to Christ, saying, as Zechariah here, "What are these, Lord?"

"And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem." The enemies of the churches are not said here to have wounded or killed Judah, Israel, or Jerusalem, but *וירו ventilarunt*, they have tossed them up as it were into the air; they have scattered, saith the English. It is the proper work of the enemies of the churches to scatter God's people. The disciples of Christ are commanded to be without horns; "Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves;" the word in the Greek is, *ακερατοι*, without horns as doves; but here the enemies are said to scatter Judah, Israel and Jerusalem; that is their work and property.

"And the Lord shewed me four carpenters," verse 20. The word is *חרשום\**, that is, such agents and instruments as do work with art, counsel and deliberation. Though the ene-

\* *חרשום* fabricavit.

mies of the churches be unreasonable and cruel as horned beasts, yet the instruments that God raiseth up to suppress them are full of humanity, wisdom and counsel; and they are four, too, a proportionable strength.

“Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are come to fray them away, and to cast out the horns of the gentiles.” verse 21. Look how they dealt by God’s people, so God will deal by them; they scattered Israel, and the God of Israel will raise up instruments that shall scatter them; they cast out God’s people, and they shall be cast out. Scattering enemies shall be scattered themselves at last.

“I lift up mine eyes again.” chap. ii. 1. Here is another vision brought to the same purpose, in general, to uphold and comfort the distressed servants of God. When the condition of the saints is low and their fears great, there is need of repeating comforts; then visions, promises and consolations must be oft repeated, “I lift up mine eyes again.”

“And I looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand;” that is for to build exactly. Verse 2., tells us it was for to measure Jerusalem, which cannot barely be understood literally, for chap. i. 16., it is said, “I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies, saith the Lord, my house shall be built in it, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem,” &c. which promise in its latitude was never yet fulfilled literally, but it is to be understood of the new Jerusalem especially, mentioned in Rev. xxi. Where we find a man also at this measuring work. So that we may yet say, though the afflictions of the churches be very great, and their desolations many, yet if a man will lift up his eyes and stir up himself, he may and shall behold, “a man with a measuring line in his hand.” And thus you see that there is hardly a word of these three visions, but affordeth some special instruction. But because I have not time for all, I shall especially close with those three doctrines, that are especially held in these three visions. Thus,

1. In that here are four horns that appear, you may observe this, That when God intendeth any good and salvation to his churches, he doth first suffer many potent, malicious enemies to rise against them,

2. In that these four carpenters do appear immediately after

these four horns, as it were in the same vision, you may observe, that though God do suffer the enemies of his churches and people to be exceeding strong, many, and most mischievous, yet he will raise up an answerable strength against them; four carpenters against four horns, which shall fray them away, and deal by them as they have done by others.

3. In that the “man with a measuring line,” doth immediately follow upon these, you may observe, that when God shall please to raise up special instruments to surprise the church’s enemies, then and then especially reformation is to be much endeavoured, which is to be done with exactness, even by line.

1. I begin with the former vision of the four horns, and the first doctrine, namely, that when God intendeth any great good and salvation to his people, he doth first suffer malignant, potent, and many enemies to rise against them. Was it not so with Israel when God intended to bring them out of Egypt? Then their taskmasters arose and doubled their work, and were more inimicitious to them than formerly. Was it not thus with the Jews when God brought them out of Babylon to build the temple? opposition they met withal in their remove, in their journey, and all along in their temple-work. Was it not thus with the Israelites when they went to execute justice upon that malignant tribe of Benjamin for the great sin of Gibeah? If you look into Judges xx., you shall find that before Benjamin was punished they got two great victories upon Israel; Israel, (if you count the number of their soldiers) were twelve to one; Israel had the best cause, and their work was good, they went forth to do justice on that delinquent tribe; yet if you consult the story, the tribe of Benjamin first slew of them down to the ground forty thousand men. This is God’s way still; he seldom or never destroyeth his enemies but out of zeal; “The zeal of the Lord of Hosts hath done this,” saith the prophet: now zeal is nothing else but angered love; and three things there are in the world that God doth love especially, his people, his truth, and his worship; when the enemies prevail, they spoil his people, they defile his worship, they scorn his truth, so his love is angered, his zeal is stirred, and then his enemies are confounded.

But what reason is there why God should suffer his pre-

cious servants and people to be thus handled, oppressed, gored, scattered by cruel enemies ?

Good reason for it. *Totidem inimici, totidem pedagogi*: so many enemies, so many school-masters. “ Make plain my way before me (saith the Psalmist) because of mine enemies ;” but in the Hebrew it is, “ because of mine observers :” our enemies are our observers, and their observation is our preservation.\* As a man’s best friend sometimes doth him more hurt than his worst enemy, so his worst enemy doth him more good than his best friend. Now suppose, saith Salmeron,† that a man were in great want and need of money, and his friend should throw him a bag of gold, though in his catching of it he might hurt his hands or head, yet when he hath taken out the gold, he loves his friend nevertheless. There is no persecution but brings a bag of gold to God’s people ; though it may somewhat hurt them in falling upon them, yet when they have picked out the gold thereof, they will love God the more.

Let me instance :

Hereby they are occasioned to honour God, which is the end of their life and the comfort of their soul : for what is honour, but as Aquinas ‡ speaks, a testimony of another’s excellency ? The more I testify of any excellency in any truth or way of God’s, the more I honour him ; and in times of persecution the saints of God do thus testify of him.

Hereby the children of God are weaned from the world, and made to hie them home to their Father’s house.

Hereby they are made more useful in their places, and beneficial unto their enemies ; for therefore our enemies do us so much hurt, because we do them no more good.

\* שׂוֹר Inimicus quasi observator dictus, quod semper observet et contempletur quibus malefaciat.—Buxtorf.

† Magna Dei misericordia in flagello temporali : ut si quis crumenam gravem et anro onustam ex edito loco in caput cujusdam pro debito aliquo in carcerem detenti proficeret et dolorem aliquem ei inferret, et tumorem capitis excitaret, et unam vel alteram guttulam sanguinis eliceret, ille quidem rei ignarus moleste ferret in principio, et vicem suam magnopere doleret quod afflicto afflictio adderetur ; verum si paulo post animo jam tranquillo ad jaxum oculos suos convertit, et crumenam multo auro resectam deprehendat, quo possit debita sua persolvere et quod superest ad vitam tranquillies placideque traduceudam sufficere, profecto de illato tantillo vulnere nulla esset amplius querimonia vel memoria, imo seria congratulatio : Ad eundem modum de Christi flagellis considerandum.—Salmer. de miracul. in Joan. iii.

‡ Honor est testimonium de alicujus excellentia.—Aquinas.

Hereby they carry the truths of God and Christ into other parts; the enemy intendeth to scatter their persons, but God intendeth to scatter his truths.

Hereby the children of God receive a fuller and clearer testimony of their own graces. When the world frowns most, God smiles most upon them. When the enemy gives the loudest testimony of their hypocrisy, God from heaven doth give the highest testimony of their sincerity to their bosoms.

Hereby the enemies themselves are more convinced. Some men snore so loud in their sleep, that they wake themselves with their own snortings; and some men's sins are so loud and unreasonable, that they convince themselves and others by their own unreasonable dealing with the people of God. Master Fox tells of one in queen Mary's time that had so basely and maliciously used that servant of God James Abbes, that when that good man James Abbes was dead, the remembrance of this martyr's patience and his own unreasonableness, made the persecutor cry out and say, James Abbes is saved, and I am damned; and so he went wringing his hands to his grave, crying, James Abbes is saved and I am damned, James Abbes is saved and I am damned. It is recorded also of one Calocerius, that when he saw the malignancy of the enemies, and patience of the martyrs, he cried out and said, Of a truth great is the God of the christians.\* And what can a christian desire more? Is not God's truth better than my house?

Hereby also the saints are kept from and cured of divisions among themselves. Cyprian meditating of the several causes that brought those sad and heavy persecutions in the primitive times, reckoneth up this for one, their own divisions, wherefore God was fain to let out the dog upon the sheep, that the sheep might run together. Our punishments oftentimes wear the names of our sins in their foreheads: and if ever, then now; God doth punish our divisions with divisions; but it is to cure our divisions. He points to our sin by our punishment, that in our punishment we may be cured of sin.

Hereby also the servants of God may see and know by experience, that it is better to serve God than men. When

\* Vere magnus Deus Christianorum.

we worship God after and for the precepts of men, we do rather worship men than God, and serve them than him; and when his servants do so, then God suffers men to rise up against them, that they may learn in a smarting way, as well as they have done in a sinning way, what it is to serve men.\* This cause you have expressed, 2 Chron. xii. 7, 8, "And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance, and my wrath shall not be poured out by the hand of Shishak; nevertheless they shall be his servants, that they may know my service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries."

Hereby again the servants of God learn the right use of the rod, both in church and state: sometimes it so falleth out that justice is not executed in a kingdom, and discipline not exercised in a church; Well then, saith God, seeing that you will not take the rod into your hand, I will take it into mine own, but it shall be in such a manner as shall make all your hearts to ache. In Rev. ii. and iii. you know that there are seven epistles written to the seven churches, and there is none of all the churches but are threatened with one affliction, calamity or another, save only that of Philadelphia, and if you mark it, you shall find that only that church had the keys rightly used and handled. And you shall find this also in all God's dealings both with states and churches: let a state or kingdom be never so wicked, yet if justice be executed there is hope thereof; let a church be never so defiled, yet if discipline be exercised, there is hope of that: but if a kingdom where there is no justice, or a church where there is no discipline, nor *in tendentia* to it, then the Lord himself ariseth and saith, Well, because you will not take this rod into your hand, I will, and I will raise up enemies against you that shall do the same to you, that you should have done to them. Good reason therefore, yea, infinitely good reason, that God should sometimes suffer his own people to be pushed, gored, scattered, by cruel and bloody enemies that are most unreasonable.

Wherefore then let no man be stumbled or offended at

\* Qui Deum ideo colit ut aliud magis quam ipsum assequatur, non Deum sed illud colit quod assequi concupiscit.—Augustin.

God's present proceedings in the world, or in this kingdom, though very mysterious. Our Saviour says, "These things I tell ye before, that when they come to pass, ye may not be offended;" and whatsoever is now come to pass among us, Christ hath told us of it before; yea, this Scripture. Yet, good Lord, how many are there that are offended! Oh, says one, we looked for reformation, and we meet with confusion; for light, and we meet with darkness; we looked that Jesus Christ should at this time have restored his kingdom to the churches; for friends, and we meet with enemies; can God love us, and suffer such enemies to rise against us? Were there ever any enemies that were like to ours? so potent, so cruel, so many, so blasphemous, so hellish, &c.

But who art thou, O man, that speakest thus long without book under the command of unbelief, and darkenest knowledge? Shouldst thou not rather write so and such over thy sins, than over thine afflictions? You say, had ever any of God's people such enemies as we; so cruel, so many, so vile, &c.? You should rather say, Come, O my soul, did ever any commit such sins as I do; so frequently, so knowingly, so deliberately, so incorrigibly, so scandalously? Why do not rather write the *so* upon your sins, than upon your sorrows? Thus did Eusebius Nieremburgius, aggravating his own sins, Oh, saith he, never any sinned so as I have done, the devil sinned indeed, but Christ never died for him as he hath done for me; Judas sinned indeed, but he was never pardoned as I have been; Achan sinned indeed and troubled the kingdom, but he had not that light and knowledge as I, nor lived under such means as I have done; oh, never any sinned so as I have done: thus Nierembergius, thus Parisiensis, and thus should you think and say.\*

But besides, though your enemies be so great, so many, so cruel, &c., as none of God's people have had before; know you not that this is most agreeable to Scripture? When Satan's time is short, his wrath is great, Rev. xii. The latter times of the world are above all others by the

\* Domine Deus meus, quod est malum cujus ego reus non sum, vel perpetrando illud opere, vel volendo illud perpetrare? quod enim est bonum quod in me non extinxi, vel in alio persecutus non sum impediendo ne fieret, vel detrabendo jam facto, vel permittendo extingui, vel gaudendo si extinguebatur in ipso? Domine misericordiæ, quot bona perierunt vel me procurante ut non essent, vel me non juvante ut essent?—Parisiens.

apostle called "the perilous times," Austin observeth that the church from Christ to Christ, from Christ's death to Christ's coming again, should meet with three sorts of persecutions; one by the sword, as in the primitive times; another by heresies, as in the Arian times; the other both by sword and heresies, as in these latter antichristian times.\* Luther says well, Cain shall be killing his brother Abel to the end of the world, but he is most bloody in his old days. It is observed to my hand, that the four great monarchies, who have been the constant enemies of the church, are compared by Daniel unto four beasts, a "leopard, a bear, a lion," &c., but the antichristian beast that should arise in the latter times is made up of all these; his feet being the feet of a bear, his mouth the mouth of a lion, himself like a leopard, and the dragon giving his power unto him, Rev. xiii. 2. As if the cruelties of all the monarchies were concentrated and met in him. Of all enemies, you shall observe those are most deadly and cruel that are apostates, that have been once professors, and then prove apostates: † therefore the devil, the Jew, and antichrist are greatest enemies to the saints, because they are all apostates. Now the enemies that are risen up in our days are apostatizing enemies, and therefore if they prevail, which God in mercy forbid, are like to prove the sorest enemies that ever the English sun did see; yea, worse than the enemies of those Marian days; for in queen Mary's time we read that here and there two, three, four, or ten were brought forth to the stake, but should these enemies now prevail, not two, or three, or four, or ten, but three thousands, and four thousands, and ten thousands would be led out together to be all massacred. In queen Mary's time though the parent died, the child did inherit his land; but now at once our lands, our liberties, our children, our religion and we are all like to die together. In queen Mary's days Germany was open, and a place of refuge to God's people, many did fly thither, and were safe in the time of that storm; but now if these enemies prevail,

\* Prima ecclesiæ persecutio fuit violenta per mundi principes; secunda fraudulenta per hæreticos; tertia erit violenta et fraudulenta simul, ubi scilicet temporalis et spiritualis potestas in unum convenient adversus Dominum et Christum ejus.—Augustin.

† Solus apostata est persecutor ordinis sui.

whither should God's servants fly? Not to Frankfort, not to the Palatinate, not to Bohemia, not to Ireland, not to Scotland, I had almost said not to our graves, for they will hardly give us grave room in our own country. Oh, the black and dismal day that is like to come upon us, if these horns that are now pushing at us should prevail against us. Well, but remember God's method, your own sins and God's method; his method is, first the horns, and then the carpenters; though the horns may push, and gore, and scatter for a time, yet the carpenters shall fray them away, and cast out these gentiles. And so I come to the second vision of the four carpenters, and the second doctrine, namely,

Secondly, Though God suffer the enemies of his church and people to be exceeding strong, cruel, and very many, yet he will raise up proportionable strength against them, apt and fitted instruments to suppress them, who shall fray them away and deal by them as they have dealt by others. This is in the commission of those who are deputed to destroy Babylon, Rev. xviii. 6. "Reward her even as she hath rewarded you." And to this purpose, I say, God will raise up a suitable and proportionable strength, four carpenters for the four horns. Now the truth of all this will be more fully evidenced, if you consider those names, titles, and attributes wherewith Jesus Christ hath invested himself; titles and attributes directly opposite to all that evil which is any of the church's enemies. Three enemies you know there are by whom you are most molested, the flesh, the devil, the world.

The flesh brings forth three great evils. Ignorance in the understanding; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called our Prophet. Rebellion in the will; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called our King. Guiltiness that ariseth from ignorance and rebellion; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called our Priest.

The devil our second enemy is armed with all weapons of hostility against us; therefore there are several names given to him. He is said to be the *strong man*, ο ἰσχυρὸς, "when the strong man keepeth the house," &c.; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called ἰσχυροῦτερός αὐτοῦ, stronger than he, Luke xi. 22. The devil is called the accuser of the brethren; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called our Advocate.

The devil is called Apollyon, destroyer; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called our Saviour. The devil is called the old serpent; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called the brasen serpent. The devil is called a roaring lion, in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called "a Lion of the tribe Judah\* The devil is called the god of this world, the prince of the air; in opposition to that Jesus Christ is called the "Prince of Peace, the mighty God." Thus whatever terms or titles of strength and power there is in Satan, there is somewhat in Jesus Christ that answereth, yea that over-answereth all.

And for our third enemy, the world, you cannot have a more full description of its power than as it is presented to you in Rev. xiii. 1. "I saw a beast arising out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns." Our text speaks but of four horns, and here are ten; yet if you look into Rev. v. you shall find an answerable strength in Christ, who is described to be a Lamb having seven horns, seven rather than ten being the number of perfection in Scripture. But if you think that seven is not enough to equalize the ten, you find also in Habak. iii. 4. that the Lord our God is said to have horns in his hand, because all the works of his hand are done in strength and power. So that whatever your enemies are, there is strength enough in Jesus Christ to subdue their strength.

And why is Christ thus furnished, but for his church and people? He is the Lord-keeper of all our comforts, the Lord-treasurer of all our graces, and the great magazine of all our ammunition.† He was anointed that he might anoint; he was sanctified that he might sanctify; he received of the Father that he might give unto you, unto you I say and unto all the churches. He is the head of his church, and therefore, as Luther‡ observeth well, though every member is sensible of wrong or hurt done to another member, yet the head

\* Iste leo ob feritatem, Christus ob fortitudinem Christus leo ad vincendum, diabolus ad nocendum.—Augustin.

† Christus communis thesaurus.—Luther.

‡ Sensus subtilior et velocior est in capite quam in reliquis membris corporis: hoc experientia videmus, nam læso dignitulo aut alia minima corporis parte læsa, statim caput in vultu prodit sese hoc sentire; nasus enim contrahitur, oculi torvum vident: sic Christus caput nostrum afflictiones nostras suas facit et ut in capite omnes sensus, &c.—Luther.

is much more sensible then all the members, for the head is the seat and habitation of all the senses; the hand may touch, but it cannot see; the foot may feel, but it cannot hear or taste; the head sees and feels and hears and tastes, and smells; so, says he, it is with Christ our head, in whom all the senses dwell, and therefore infinitely more sensible of the church's misery then any other member in all the world; and sensible he cannot be unless in due time he be helpful unto them. Upon this very ground you shall find that God promiseth to raise up seven shepherds and eight principal men for the help of his people, Micah v. 5. "When the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds and eight principal men;" As if he should say, though you have been heretofore without guides, and captains, and commanders, and princes, yet when the enemy is come into your land, I will raise up instruments enough to suppress them; and look what these Assyrians have done unto you, that shall my instruments and workmen do unto them; do they come into your country and tread down your palaces; so shall mine instruments go into their country and tread down their palaces, ver. 6. And would you know the ground of all this? It is my love in Christ, for, "thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." And ver. 4. "He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they shall abide; and this man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land, ver. 5." So that whosoever doth but seriously consider the strength and anointment of Jesus Christ, must needs conclude this doctrine with me: Though God suffer the enemies of his church and people to be many and great, yet in due time he will raise up a proportionable strength against them to suppress them and to deal by them as they have done by others.

The application of this doctrine looks two ways:

To the saints in general;

To the carpenters in special.

To the saints by way of consolation and encouragement.

To the carpenters, to God's workmen, by way of direction and exhortation.

Here is consolation and encouragement unto all the saints and people of God. Wonder not that in a day of humiliation, I speak of consolation.\* Beloved, you are never more fit to mourn for sin, then when you can rejoice in God. One grace makes way for another. It is the warm beams of God's love and care must thaw our hearts. Two things that we are this day to do. To wrestle with God; to fight with our enemies. You cannot in your wrestling take better hold of God then by the skirt of a promise; you cannot fight better against your enemies than by faith. The devil, with whom especially we fight in these wars, will not be killed with swords and knives; "This is our victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith." It is written in the life of Mr. Tyndale, that when he was in the Netherlands, there was a conjurer that could command dishes of meat from several men's tables, so that he would invite his friend to a dish of meat from such or such a prince's table; divers going to see his exploits, Mr. Tyndale went with the rest, if it might be, to hinder it; and when he came there, he set himself in a way of believing to hinder this conjurer's proceedings, which he did accordingly, for when that wretched man should have done his exploit, his hands were held by Mr. Tyndale's faith, and he cried out and said, I cannot do it, there sits the man that hinders me, or to that purpose. What will not faith do, if good? what will it not hinder, if evil? I will not say that in these sad days of ours we have to deal with conjurers, but surely with such persons as through their violence and thefts are able not only to command men's dishes off their tables, but all their goods out of their houses. Oh that we had but faith enough, we might soon believe them out of all their plunderings.†

Wherefore that I may raise up your faith a little and keep you from discouragements, I lay before you this promise; Zechariah's vision is your promise; yea it is somewhat more, for as we say of sacraments, so I say of these two last visions, they are promises unto the eye, unto sense. When Joshua was to bring the children of Israel into Canaan, and

\* Sanctus dolet et de dolore gaudet.—Augustin.

† Fides se demittit ad domestica.

so to meet with many enemies, before he went out, God, and Moses, and the people bestowed their several exhortations on him; and if you consult the place, you shall find that all of them, God, Moses, and the people wish him to “be of good courage, and not to fear.” Why so? Abulensis answereth, *Rationabiliter enim timere portuit Joshua*.\* Joshua might rationally fear, for he saw how that his master Moses was occasioned by the Israelites to sin against God, and to be angry, insomuch as he was kept out of Canaan; whereupon Joshua might well think thus with himself, O Lord, if Moses who was the meekest man on earth was moved to anger, the holiest man, a man that saw God face to face, yet could not do this work, but through his failing was denied entrance into Canaan; how shall I be able to lead this people up against all these enemies; well therefore might he fear (saith Abulensis) lest God should give both him and his people into the hands of his enemies. Well, but how then doth God remove these fears, and relieve his heart; only thus, he strengtheneth him with a promise, “Fear not, (says God) neither be dismayed, for I am with thee, and I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” So now, are there any of you oppressed with divers fears because of these horns that are risen up in several parts of the world, of this kingdom? The Lord hath said that according to the number of the horns, the carpenters shall be. Are there enemies in every part; there shall be carpenters in every part. Will you say, Oh but our enemies are exceeding many, and very cruel; so were these mentioned in the text, who (as Sanctius observeth, the words signify) were to do mischief *in quantum potuerunt et in quantum voluerunt*, and as your English hath it, “so that no man did lift up his head.” Will you say, Oh but I do not yet see these carpenters at work; but is it not because you do not stir up yourselves; “I lift up mine eyes and saw,” saith Zechariah. Will you say, Oh but when I do stir up myself to behold things as they are, I cannot see four for four, a proportionable strength on the church’s side raised up against the enemies; well, but yet you may see some strength in every place, wherever there is any opposition made by ene-

\* *Rationabiliter ergo timere poterat Josua, quod cum ipse fragilior esset facillime peccare poterat, ita ut deus ipsum et populum in hostilem tradere potestatem.*—Tostat. in Josu. cap. i.

mies, some there are in the same place that God hath raised up to resist them. And the text is not, that God will raise up strong gigantic carpenters, but carpenters, four carpenters, some or other that shall do the work of God, though they be never so weak. In that Micah v. where the promise is to raise up "seven shepherds and eight principal men," he saith, ver. 7., "The remnant of Jacob shall be as the dew that waiteth not for the sons of men." Mark that word, "that waiteth not for the sons of men." When Sisera and all his host were discomfited, what were the carpenters; were not Deborah and Jael with her hammer amongst them? and saith the text, "so let all thine enemies perish;" it is not only a prayer, but a prophecy.

It is recorded in the life and death of Melancthon, that when Charles the fifth, and the Pope of Rome threatened the protestants with fire and sword, Luther, Melancthon, and others got together to seek a way for themselves, their little ones, and their substance; and on a certain day after long deliberation, Philip tired out with labour, rose up exceedingly sad and very sorrowful, to go and speak with some that knocked and inquired after him at the gate; in his return to his company he heard in a room as he passed by, the noise of children, as it were pronouncing their catechism; whereupon he put aside the door where they were, and he saw the ministers' wives of the place, praying and praising God with their children; upon this Melancthon returned to his company exceeding cheerful and very joyful. Luther espying his gladsome countenance, said thus to him, Philip, how cometh it to pass that you return so joyful that went out even now so sorrowful? He answered, Let us be of good comfort, for I have seen them that will fight for us and defend us. Luther asked what those stout and brave captains were? Oh, says Melancthon, they are the chaste wives and virtuous children of holy men. It seems that holy man Melancthon thought such carpenters were a great matter in his time. Beloved, you have many such carpenters as these at work for you. But besides these, look into any part of the kingdom, and you shall find that wherever any horn is raised up, there is a carpenter at work also, some or other that God hath unexpectedly raised up to make resistance. Wherefore, then, lift up your heads, oh, all ye people of the Lord, and be not dis-

couraged; what Zechariah saw, you shall find, God's promise is your security, he will raise up four carpenters to the four horns.

Again, This doctrine speaks direction to the carpenters, it tells them what they ought to do, and what is their work. The work of the four carpenters, you see, is not only to fray these horns away, but to cast out the gentiles. Whoever, therefore, you are, whom God hath raised up for this employment, behold your service, up and be doing, and do it fully; "Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently; and withholdeth his hand from shedding of blood:" they are knit together in one verse, Jer. xlvi. 10.

But we are now upon the work of reformation, building the temple; and if a man be a man of blood he is not fit for that service.

Mistake me not, it is not in my intention to call for blood. Oh that in this day of our humiliation and addresses to God, we could so touch the hem of Christ's garment, that England's bloody issue might be staunch'd! Be as mild as you can, so you be like unto Christ, who was both a lamb and a lion; a lamb in his own cause, a lion in God's. Meekness and justice may well stand together. Moses was the meekest man upon earth, you know, yet when Israel had defiled themselves with idols in the matter of the golden calf, he stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Exod. xxxii. 27, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate through the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour." He doth not say, Slay every man his enemy, or every man his countryman, but every man his brother, and his companion, and his neighbour.\* And, verse 28, it is said, "The children of Levi did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men:" yet the Levites had their hand in temple-work more than any other tribe, and Moses had

\* *Moses totus ex misericordia et justitia compositus, totus ex benignitate et severitate conflatus: nam in monte misericordiam a Deo postulabat, ver. 32, in campo justitiam exercebat, ver. 27. Quis non miretur tantam pietatem cum tanta severitate conjunctam?—Mendoza in 1 Sam. ii.*

*Sic amavit eos quibus præfuit, ut pro eis nec sibi parceret et tamen delinquentes sic persecutus est, quos amavit, ut eos etiam Domino parcente prosterneret.—Gregory.*

the honour to build the tabernacle. You read also, in Zech. xiii. of a great and glorious reformation, so high, so great and so convincing, that the very priests who were wont to go in rough garments to deceive the people, should throw away their priest's coats, and say, verse 5, "I am no prophet, I am an husbandman, for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth." As if they should say severally, Though I am able to read a chapter, yet I am not fit to be a minister, I have no learning, but in truth am more fit to go to the plough. Well but now mark, I pray, how this great change and reformation is ushered in and brought about, not without some kind of holy violence, for it is said, verse 2, "It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall be no more remembered; and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirits to pass out of the land: and (verse 3) it shall come to pass that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth." And, verse 6, when any should ask him, "What are those wounds in thy hands? then he shall answer, Those wherewith I was wounded in the house of my friends." Another notable scripture you have for this purpose in Psalm xxiv., when the question is made at verse 3, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place?" that is, Who is fit to be a member of a true church? answer is made to this at verses 4, 5, 6: "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart," &c. Wherefore then saith the psalmist, "Lift up your heads, oh, ye gates;" that is, magistrates that sit in the gates: "and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;" that is, of the churches, for the doors of the churches are everlasting doors, against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail:" and then, "the King of glory shall come in;" that is, God will come in and dwell amongst you in his great glory, and your very congregations shall be filled with glory. But, "Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty (saith the psalmist), the Lord mighty in battle, the Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory:" that is, thus will he bring his glory into the churches, by shewing himself to be "the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." Wherefore, then, "lift up your heads, oh, ye gates," and execute you justice and judgment,

“and be you lift up, ye everlasting doors” of the churches, and be you reformed, and “the King of glory shall come in” with his glory into your congregations. But if you ask me who this King of glory is? I must tell you he is the Lord of hosts, and so he will be known unto you when he bringeth his glory amongst you, “even the Lord strong and mighty in battle.” Wherefore I say, lift up your heads, oh, you carpenters and servants of the Lord, drawn forth to that employment; you see your work, the text hath cut it out, I beseech you in the Lord Christ, do it, and do it thoroughly, only let me lay in one caution, which is this:

When you have frayed away the horns, and cast out the gentiles, take heed that the spirit of the horns do not live in the carpenters. When the children of Israel drove the Canaanites out of their land, they did as well inherit their sins as their lands; the sins they came to punish they did commit, the spirit of the Canaanites did dwell in the Israelites. So it was with Jehu when he had beat down the house of Ahab. So with Amaziah, who when he had destroyed the Edomites, he brought the gods of the children of Seir and set them up to be his gods, 2 Chron. xxv. 14, 15. This is too common in times of reformation. You all know what a blessed instrument of reformation Master Calvin was in his time, yet when he came to that matter of denying the Lord’s supper to Bartlerius and other Servetians, who were most unworthy, those that otherwise were called protestants rose up in opposition to him, insomuch that he was ready if not altogether forced to leave Geneva for a time.\* And was it not thus in that unhappy difference at Frankfort? † In Queen Mary’s time you know that many left this their own country and did fly to Germany; when they came there, did not many of them that fled for religion prove pushing, goring horns unto their brethren? Yea, some of them were so bitter to others, that they

\* At ego, inquit Calvinus, Chrysostomum sequuntur, occidi me potius patiar, quam hæc manus Dei contemptoribus judicatis sancta Domini porrigat.

A prandio vero Calvinus locum illum insignem Actorum Apost. forte tractans in quo Paulus ecclesiæ Ephesinæ, testatus se eum non esse qui adversus magistratum pugnare sciret aut doceret, cœtumque; multis verbis cohortatus ut in ea quam audivisset doctrina perseveraret, tandem veluti postremam concionem Genevæ habiturus, et quemadmodum, inquit, se res habent. liceat mihi quoque fratres apud vos hæc apostoli verba usurpare, commendo vos Deo et sermoni gratiæ ejus.—Mæl. Adam. de vita Calvinii.

† Histoire de Frankfort.

complained of and impeached that reverend man Master Knox of high treason against imperial dignity, insomuch that he was banished from the city and driven from his congregation. Oh, what a sad thing is this, that the spirit of papists should live in protestants; that the spirit of the horns should live in the carpenters; that the spirit of prelates should live in those that are risen up to fray them away and cast them out! I say no more, but when we have done all, cast out the gentiles and frayed away the horns; if then we shall turn and gore and cast out our brethren and one another, God will find it out, and will not put it up at England's hands. Wherefore, my beloved, in the fear of God let us all remember this caution: oh, take heed that the spirit of the horns do not dwell in the carpenters. And so I come to the third vision, "A man with a measuring-line in his hand," and the third doctrine, which is this:

When God shall raise up his carpenters against his church's enemies, then, and then especially, reformation is to be laid unto the line. You see how these three visions are knit together, one following immediately upon another, shewing not the coherence of the words only, but of the matter. The doctrine therefore falleth asunder into two propositions:

1. Stones of reformation are to be laid with most exactness.

2. When God raiseth up his carpenters against his church's enemies, then, and then especially, this exact reformation is to be much endeavoured.

1. Stones of reformation are to be laid with most exactness. Temple-work is a great work and of great consequence. When the matter that a man is to work upon is precious, the eye curious and exact that he is to work unto, and the work itself of infinite consequence, there exactness is much required, especially when a miscarriage can hardly be mended but with much difficulty. Now so it is in the work of reformation: the matter to be wrought upon are the souls of men and women, the most precious matter in the world; the eye that we are to work unto is God's, is Christ's, who walketh between the golden candlesticks; and the business itself is of infinite consequence, yours and mine and thousands' eternities lying at the stake; and if there be a miscarriage, it will be a hard thing to bring the whole nation unto the work

again. You see that when a man walketh upon the rope, he carrieth a pole in his hand to sway him, and he looks diligently to his feet, *quia non licei bis peccare*, because if he do fail he cannot mend his miscarriage. And I say, that in this work of reformation, if there be the least slip, it will be a hard thing to recover it, when once a nation is settled in that miscarriage. Surely therefore the work is to be done with the most exactness.

It is only exactness that doth cause conviction in those that do behold. There is no national reformation, but the eyes of nations are upon it. Give me leave to tell you what I have read in a letter written from a learned professor of divinity in an university beyond the seas, who writes thus to England:\* Upon your reformation, saith he, if happily performed, doth depend the reformation of all the churches in christendom, as upon a rule and exemplar. So that I say, there is no reformation on foot in any nation, but the eyes of other nations are upon it. If it be done exactly, the beholding nations will also come in and say, We will take hold of your skirt, and your God shall be our God. When Judah shineth, and God's glory resteth upon them, then nations come in and join themselves unto them, Isa. lx. 1, 2, 3. It is only beauty that doth take the eye; when there is no beauty, there is no allurement; *καλος*, beautiful, comes from *καλειν*, which signifies to call, because beauty calls forth the eye and holds it in its beams. Now four things must concur to beauty. There must be all the parts; all in their proportion; all in their due place; all laid over with a sweet and lively colour. So it is in the beauty of God's house; there must be all the ordinances; all in their place; all in due proportion; and laid over with the power of godliness. When these meet in any church, there is beauty; but meet they cannot, unless there be exactness in reforming. Surely therefore stones of reformation are to be laid with most exactness.

2. But what reason is there of the second proposition, which is, that then this exact reformation is especially to be endeavoured, when God shall raise up his carpenters against

\* A vestra reformatione, siquidem fœliciter peracta, pendebit reformatio omnium aliarum ecclesiarum in christianismo, tanquam a norma et exemplari.—D. Voet.

the church's enemies? for when the carpenters do arise the times are troublous.

True, they are indeed; but God chooseth troublous times to build in both his house and walls of the city. The churches have always lost most in times of peace, and gained most in times of trouble.\* Whilst the ten persecutions continued, the integrity of the churches was best preserved. The psalmist saith, "Send out thy light and thy truth, O Lord, and let them lead me unto thine altar," Psalm xliii. 4. There is no going unto God's altar with worship, without the leading hand of truth; and there is no building God's house for an altar without light. When God made the world, he first made light on the first day, as an example unto us in all our works to work by light. Now light and truth do break forth much in troublous times.

Troublous times are praying times, and praying times are knowing times. "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God," Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5.

In troublous times men's hearts are most low and humbled, and so more apt and ready to receive and to be led into any truth. You read in Isa. xi., that God promiseth that in the latter times "the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord;" and in the verses a little before, it is said of the lion and the young lion, "that a child shall lead them:" these two go well together; but the stout lion-like spirit will never be led by the hand of a sucking child, until it be brought down and low by troublous times.

In troublous times God is pleased to communicate himself more freely to his people. God is not unto his in affliction as at other times; he is most sweet when the world is most bitter. It is with a nation, church and people, in their reformation, as with a person in his first conversion: because of those many temptations that a converting person is to conflict withal, God doth more abundantly reveal and communicate himself unto him at his first conversion; so with a reforming people, because of those many oppositions that they shall

\* *Ecclesia tunc semper fuit optima quando agebat inter pessimos.*—Luther.

meet withal in that work, God doth then more than ordinarily communicate himself unto them. Thus troublous times do bring forth light and truth. God loveth to have a sacrifice from the hands of the children of Abraham out of the thickets and briars. Opposition commendeth reformation: in troublous times there is much opposition, and therefore in those times reformation is very beautiful. The doctrine is clear then, the application easy. Thus:

Hence we may all see and know what is the work of the times, even to measure the temple. Now for a long while we have had experience of the first vision, and we have felt the horns; the rising of the carpenters we have seen also; and who may not say, "I have lifted up mine eyes, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand?" Blessed be God that we have lived to see this day, to see a man stand with a measuring line in his hand in England. And whoever you are that hear me this day, you are either such as have this measuring line in your hand, or else such as are to be measured.

If you have the measuring line in your hands, then remember this doctrine, the first proposition: stones of reformation are to be laid with most exactness. Herein, if you be exact, you shall be like unto Jesus Christ, who, as Salmeron observeth,\* when he came to purge the temple, did not only admonish, chide, reprove the money-changers, or whip them away, but did overthrow their very tables, *ne impium opus facile repeterent*, lest they should recover their trade again. In other things you are very exact: men are exact in their trades, exact in their accounts, exact in their reckonings, exact in their diet, exact in their sleep, exact in their hair both of head and face; in small things you are exact, and will you not be exact in this greatest? You know what other reformed churches have done; the reformation of all other churches are round about you, you have their writings before you, their books, their practices, their examples, and this for many years: can you think that God hath set us now for an hundred years upon their shoulders, to see no further into reformation than they have done? If two men be to do the same work, the one first and the other after; he

\* Sacerdotes in templo offendentes sunt flagellorum dignissimi.—Salmeron in Joan. 3.

that doth it first, though he doth it never so well, yet will excuse himself and say, I never saw the work done before me, I was fain to invent my very tools and instruments; and you will excuse him though there be some failing in him: but when the second man cometh to the same work that hath a former example, and all his tools to help him, you expect more exactness from him. You know my meaning, I need not apply this; oh, that our God would make England the praise of the whole earth; nothing will do it but our exactness in reformation. Certainly this reformation that is now on foot, hath, as I may speak with reverence, cost our God very dear, the liberties, the estates, the lives and blood of many of his dear children, “of whom the world was not worthy.” Do you think God will lay out all this for an imperfect, unexact, poor and low reformation? Let me present you with the prophecy of Bishop Hooper, who when he was in prison called his printer to him, and said, You shall outlive these Marian times, and see the alteration of the present religion, when the gospel shall be freely preached; wherefore remember me to my brethren, as well in exile as others, and bid them be circumspect in displacing of popish priests, and put good ministers in churches, or else their end will be worse than ours. He said, be circumspect; I say, be exact: and though I do not wish that every morning there might be a boy crying at your doors, as once at Philip’s, *Mortalis es*, Thou art mortal, thou art mortal; for that the drum doth sufficiently every morning; yet I could wish that this sentence might be sounding in your hearts every morning and night, that it might lie down with you and rise with you: Stones of reformation are to be laid with most exactness.

But how shall that be?

Thus: be sure of this that you take the right *line* into your hands. God’s word it is our *line*, able to reach unto all particular affairs of the churches.

Mistake me not, I pray. A church is considered two ways; as a meeting of people, men and women; or as a church meeting, a meeting of saints, apparent believers, *cætus fidelium*. I do not say that the word is to be the only line and rule to the church in the first respect, so reason may be a rule to men as men; but in the second respect it is, the word is able to reach unto all things belonging unto a church

as a church. Our commission is not larger now than the apostles' commission was, and their commission ran thus: "Go teach and baptize, &c., teaching men to observe whatever I command you," Matt. xxviii. If not commanded by Christ, then not to be preached by them nor by us. Jesus Christ was and is as fully Christ in his prophetic as priestly office, and his priestly satisfaction reached unto all our sins, though they were never so small, therefore his prophetic direction reacheth to all our duties, though they be never so little. That which cometh not from heaven, can never bring you into heaven. If you say, There are some things indifferent; it is true, but Christ's command is to keep them so then, and not to alter them.\* If you say that circumstances are left unto the church; either you mean all circumstances, or some; if you mean only some, then you conclude nothing, for a particular proposition cannot make a general conclusion; if you mean that all circumstances are left unto the church, then you do at once and at one stroke cut off three commandments from the decalogue; the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other Gods but me," commandeth the substance of worship, the second the means, the third the manner, the fourth the time; and means, manner, and time are circumstances. Herein Luther speaks well, † Whatsoever a man believeth, or learneth, or teacheth besides the word, it is sin; and again, saith he, ‡ The church is the daughter of Scripture, brought up at the feet of the word. Oh, the perfection of that line, it is a complete line, a glorious line, a blessed line. Take this line therefore first into your hands.

\* Cum Moses per incultam et desertam regionem populum exulem et vagum traduceret, in tanta olitudine quicquid vel dicendum vel agendum esset, semper consuluit Dominum, nihil unquam attulit de suo; prophetæ semper aiunt, verbum Domini, visio Domini, vox Domini, hæc dicit Dominus, audite Dominum; Ego (inquit Paulus) evangelium meum non accepi ab homine, neque per hominem; imo Christus omnia inquit quæ audivi a Patre meo tradidi vobis, et prædicate inquit non quicquid inciderit, sed evangelium omni creaturæ.—Jewel in Concione ad Clerum de verb. Dei, page 55, 56, &c.

† Circumst. cur, quomodo, quando, quibus auxiliis. Quicquid vivitur, docetur, discitur extra verbum, peccatum est. Ecclesia est Scripturæ filia.—Luther.

‡ Non enim nostro judicio instituenda est religio, sed e verbo Dei. Omnia pervertuntur, cum religio non verbo Dei, sed hominum arbitrio nititur.—Jewel, Concio ad Clerum de verbo Dei.

When you have gotten this line into your hand, view your ground well, and stones well, that you are to draw this *line* over. Three sorts there are that are especially to be lined by it: the magistrates, the ministers, the congregations. These three the Pope and prelates, notwithstanding their flattering with princes, have especially laboured to degrade and to deprive of that power which was given unto them by Jesus Christ. The magistrates, and therefore the “man of sin” is so described by the apostle, that he “shall exalt himself above all that is called God,” 1 Thess. ii. 4. The ministers and elders of the church, and therefore you shall observe that from Rev. vii. to xiv. there is no more mention made of elders, unless it be in relation unto that same time. In chap. iv. the condition of the church is stated, and then the elders are mentioned; so again in the vth and viith, but in the after chapters to the xivth you have the story of anti-christ, his rise, his reign, and ruin; and till the fall of anti-christ, which is begun in the xivth and perfected in the xviiiith, we read no more of the elders; but in the beginning of the xixth, after Babylon is fallen, then come forth the elders again, praising God, and with great joy. So in our service-book, the collect runs thus, “Send down upon our bishops and curates,” &c., as if ministers and elders were only bishops’ curates, and had no power but under them. The congregations also have been much oppressed by them, therefore Azorius\* the Jesuit professeth ingenuously, that until Gregory the first, and Charles the great, the congregations had the power of choosing their own ministers; since antichrist’s power the congregations have lost their power.

Now beloved in the Lord, there is none of all these three but have some power about church affairs; the magistrate he hath his power, and therefore he is called “a nursing father;” the minister and elder, he hath his power, therefore is commanded *ποιμαινειν*, which signifieth both to feed and

\* Non itaque; inciamur veterem ritum ac morem episcopos eligendi, quo plebe præsentò, imò et ipsius suffragis aliquando eligebantur: nam in Africa illum morem observatum esse constat ex electione Eradii successoris S. Augustin in Græcia ætate S. Chrysostum ex libro ejus 3. de sacerdote: qua quidem eligendi Episcopi ratio usque; ad Gregorium I. ut constat ex ejus epistolis, imò et ad Caroli Magni, et Ludovici II. Imperatorum usque; tempora perduravit.—Azor. instit. Morab. p. 2. l. 3. c. 28.

rule; the congregation hath its power, and therefore well saith that blessed and learned man Dr. Whitaker,\* who is now in heaven: If you consider the government of the church in regard of its Head, Christ, so it is monarchical; if in regard of the elders, so it is aristocratical; if in regard of the people who have a power to choose their own officers, it is democratical: whether this power of theirs be a matter of privilege or of jurisdiction, I dispute not now; but a power they have: a power the people, a power the minister and elder, a power the magistrate; and if your line can be so drawn, as that every one of these three may have that native power which Jesus Christ hath left them by legacy, then have you drawn your line aright: view therefore your ground well.

Which that you may do, in the next place take heed of self-engagements and self-respects in this work of reformation. *Veritas stat in aperto campo*, the truth stands in the open field, it sees no house, it sees no friend, no home; and if your eye be upon your engagements, your hand will draw the line awry. Chrysostom observeth, that when our Saviour propounded the parable of the husbandmen unto the scribes and pharisees, saying, "What shall be done to these husbandmen?" Matt. xxi. 41., the Jews answered, "He shall miserably destroy those husbandmen;" Luke xx. 16, yet in another gospel when our Saviour saith, "he shall miserably destroy them," the Jews answered, "God forbid." In one gospel their answer is related to be, "He shall miserably destroy them;" in the other gospel their answer is related on the contrary, "God forbid." How can these agree? Yes, says Chrysostom, for first they say, "he will miserably destroy these husbandmen;" but when they perceived Christ

\* *Ergo si velimus Christum ipsam respicere, fuit semper ecclesiæ regimen monarchicum; si ecclesiæ presbyteros qui in doctrina et disciplina suas partes agebant, aristocraticum: si totum corpus ecclesiæ quatenus in electione episcoporum et presbyteros suffragia ferebat ita tamen ut εν τοξια semper a presbyteris servaretur, democraticum: sic partim monarchicum, partim aristocraticum, partim democraticum est semperque fuit ecclesiæ regimen; non quod unus aliquis episcopus potuit pro suo arbitratu singula facere, sed quod Christus summus ecclesiæ suæ monarcha episcopum quemque suo loco constituit, qui cum consilio pastorum, seniorum, et populi ecclesiam quoque suam regeret: hanc fuisse ecclesiæ apostolicæ πολιτειαν ex scripturis discimus, eamque longo tempore conservatum in ecclesiis fuisse historiæ ecclesiasticæ tetantur.—Whitaker controvers. iv. de Rom. Pontif. q. i. c. i.*

that aimed at them, then they said, "God forbid." So misleading are all self-respects and engagements in receiving the truth; reforming persons therefore must be self-denying persons.

They must deny their own wits, understandings, reasonings, though they be never so plausible: *Da mihi baptizatam rationem*; Give me baptized reason, saith one, mortified reason. Natural reason may be a drawer of water unto the temple but no officer in the temple.

They must deny their own wills and affections though they be never so strong. The saints in heaven are the least proprietaries to their own wills, and yet most happy. Our Saviour says, "I am not come to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me;" and this must be the resolution and practice of all those that are sent by God upon any service.\*

They must deny their own labours though they be never so great. So did Paul, who though "he laboured more abundantly than all," yet says, "I am the least of all the apostles." I have read or heard a story of one being in the boat where the king's crown was, and the crown falling accidentally into the water, he leaped after it, and having recovered it, to save himself and it, he put the crown upon his own head, that so he might swim the better unto the boat or land; but though he was thanked for his venture, yet he was sharply reprov'd for his boldness for putting the crown upon his own head. The case is ours, is yours, the crown of the Lord Jesus hath as it were fallen into the water, and been ready to sink; it is our duty and practice to venture for to save it, but you must not then set the crown upon the head of your own labours, but upon Christ himself. "The four and twenty elders threw down their crowns at the feet of Christ," Rev. iv. 10.

They must deny their own enjoyments, comforts and contentments, though they be never so sweet. So Nehemiah denied his court favours, his governor's table, and sometimes to shift his own clothes: he that will lift up one that is fallen must stoop himself.†

They must deny their own relations, though they be never so near. Salmeron observeth that our Saviour Christ did still

\* *Quia voluntati propria non divinæ obedit, sibi parit ruinam.*—Mendoza.

† *Nullus jacentem excitabit nisi in flexione sui.*—Augustin.

call his mother, woman: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" not mother, but woman. Why so, says he, but to shew that in matter of religion we are to know no relations.\* Thus must all reforming persons be self-denying persons. And thus, right worthy Zerubbabels, if you do first take the right line into your hands, then view your ground well, giving unto every one those immunities that Christ hath left him, and deny yourselves in working, your own reasons, wisdoms and understandings, your own affections, your own labours, your own outward contentments and all relations, I make no question but our stones of reformation shall be laid with much exactness, and the Lord's blessing; and the Lord grant it may be so.

As for these that are to be measured, let them be willing to be measured, to be reformed, exactly reformed, willing to be fully measured. Wonder not that I call upon you to be willing; I shall tell you what I read concerning Beza, who coming unto a disputation before the court of France, and being very mighty in his arguments against the adversary, a cardinal stood up and said unto some peers, I would to God that either Beza were dumb, or that we were all deaf; so unwilling were they to receive the truth and to be reformed by it. And if people did not in their hearts wish as much now, why should they say in every place, Would to God we had never meddled with this work of reformation; here is ado about reformation and exact reformation, see what it has come to, would to God that we had stayed in our old condition. Oh, my beloved, do you not remember Christ's complaint? "I came unto my own, and my own received me not." Shall Jesus Christ take up the like complaint and say, I came unto my own in England and they received me not; I offered, I tendered my own government unto them, and they would none of it? O England, England, how long have I stood knocking at thy door, and as it were put my finger in at the hole of the door by my providential works: wilt thou not yet open unto me? How often would I have gathered thee under my wings as a hen gathereth her chickens, and thou wouldest not; wherefore now thy house is left unto thee desolate. Oh that people therefore would be willing! yea, go to God and say, Behold,

\* *In causa religionis consanguineos non esse audiendos nec respiciendos.*—Salmeron.

Lord, we are all here before thee, do with us what is good in thine eyes, only measure us ; measure my family, measure my children, measure my servants, measure myself, only let the line of reformation pass over me and mine ; I am willing, Lord, help my unwillingness.

Then, again, if ever God shall please to bring you unto the haven of your desires, reformation in exactness, Christ in his own government into your congregations, be sure that you lay fast hold of him, that he may never leave you or go from you any more. When the spouse in the Canticles had lost Christ, she goes bemoaning, lamenting, crying and inquiring after him ; when she had found him, she brings him into the chamber of her mother, and says, “ I charge you, oh, ye daughters of Jerusalem, I charge ye by the roes and by the hinds, that ye awake not my Beloved until he please.” So do you ; if ever you light on Jesus Christ again, a settled gospel, carry him, oh, carry him into the chamber of your mother, as it were, and say unto all your friends, neighbours and congregations, I charge ye, oh, ye daughters of England, yea by the roes and hinds of the field, I charge ye, oh, ye daughters of England, that ye awake not my Beloved until he please. This do hereafter, and for the present engage yourselves thereunto.

In the mean while, that you may do and have all this, now pray, pray alone and pray in company, pray in public, pray in private. The “ man with a measuring-line in his hand,” says, Pray ; your carpenters that are abroad in the field, say, Pray ; the examples of all reformed churches, say, Pray ; your parliament, say, Pray ; your assembly, say, Pray ; your lives, your liberties, your gospel, your all, say, Pray : oh, you that have any credit in heaven, pray now ; you that never prayed before, pray now. It is but one hour and the work is done. Can ye not watch with Jesus Christ one hour ? “ Watch and pray.” And that I say unto one I say unto all, and unto my own soul, Let us all watch and pray lest we enter into temptation.