

SERMON XIII.

BABYLON'S DOWNFALL.

PREACHED AT WESTMINSTER, BEFORE SUNDRY OF THE HONOURABLE
HOUSE OF COMMONS, A. D. 1641,

PREFACE.

GOOD READER,—Thou hast, I doubt not, heard with what difficulty and pains this small work is brought forth, and delivered into the world; let the difficulty of printing quicken thine affection in reading. As the fall of Babylon is much expected, so the rising of the churches is much desired. Thy prayers and our pains may help forward both. Wherefore, that I might not be wanting to this great service, I am willing that these notes should walk abroad, which I thought should never see more light than what crept in at my study windows. This sermon may prove all the legacy which your dying friend shall be able to bequeath unto you; for I am now returning to that church and people of God, which Jesus Christ hath committed to me and others. And if in this voyage, the Lord shall put the winds and seas in commission for my death, my desire is

First, That God would forgive our adversaries, if it be his will, that have put us to these extremities.

Secondly, That it may be ever said of this island, as once it was said of Israel: "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thine help, and the sword of thine excellency," Deut. xxxiii. 29.

Thirdly, That *falling* Babylon may be *fallen* Babylon; and that all the *distressed* churches may be *restored* churches. *Vivat Christus moriatur Barrabas, moriatur Antichristus.*

For the first we have great cause to forgive, seeing all their injuries are turned unto our blessings. And therefore as Joseph said to his brethren that sold him into a strange country, "As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good: now, therefore, fear not," &c. Yet we know that public administration of justice is not contrary to personal forgiveness. We must confess, that the leaving of our own dear country, was and is most afflictive to us: a trouble to leave our good friends, convenient houses, precious liberties, and so many souls under the hazard of your eternities. But Luther's counsel is good: *Si nolint vos ferre in ditione sua non frangatur animus ad cessandum ad deferendum verbum et officium, sed perseverandum et docendum, si non in hoc loco saltem in alio. At iterum dices quid si nullo loco liceat, sed ubique; ejiciamur in toto mundo, respondet Christu nolite solliciti esse. Antequam id eveniret ut nullus locus amplius sit verbo, ego adero meo adventu, erit igitur semper locus ubi doceatis donec ego veniam, tantum vos perdurate el salvi eritis, non expeditis omnes civitates Israel quin filius hominis veniet.*—Luther loc. com. de piis exulibus. "If they will not suffer you where they have to do, let not your mind be troubled to cease from your work, or desert your office, but teach and persevere; if it be not lawful in one place, it may be in another. But thou wilt say, What if it be lawful in no place, and that we be every where cast out in the

whole world? Christ answers, Be not solicitous; before it come to pass, that no place be left for the word, I will be present by my coming; there shall always be a place where you may teach till I shall come: only do you hold on, and you shall be saved: you shall not have gone over all the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man shall come."

So that according to Luther, and the truth, though the persecutions of the churches be never so great, yet there shall always be some place free and open, as a city of refuge for God's people to fly unto, and hide themselves in, till Christ shall come by public deliverance for the churches.

For the second. You have seen what great things the Lord hath done for you; believest thou because of these, thou shalt see greater, only let us follow the star of heavenly and divine guidance, which hath led us along all this while, and not go in to consult with the scribes and pharisees of the times, with those that say they are Jews, and are not: so shall our star, the Scripture, lead us more clearly to the place and house where Christ is. Neither be thou ashamed to receive and own the truth and way of Christ, though it be despised. The wise men did worship Christ in a manger.

And for the third, I shall not prophesy if I say, the sword is now drawn, whose anger shall not be pacified till Babylon be down, and Sion raised. Yet if thou shalt meet with another suffering bout, in patience possess thy soul, in faith thy God, in love thy neighbour. And know that it is God's usual way to bring his best servants to his choice blessings by tedious bouts. Exod. xiii. 18. In the interim observe diligently what God is now doing, and help forward the work of God what you can. *Quod Deus facit pro nobis facit in nobis.* And as you would read and study some choice book to get learning, so read, attend, and study every page, line, and letter of this great volume of the Lord's works which is now extant; be in commons with the Lord's people. "The works of the Lord are sought out of all those that have pleasure in them," saith the psalmist.

Finally, good reader, pray for us, that we may stand complete in all the will of God; and though the malice of some men hath been so great, that we may not live together in one land, yet the mercy of God is so rich, that we may live together in one heaven.

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever." Amen.

Thine in Christ,

WILLIAM BRIDGE.

"*Babylon is fallen, is fallen, the great city,*" &c.—REV. xiv. 8.

THIS text hath connection with the present times, and the preceding words; for the Holy Ghost having made a description of the state and condition of the church of Christ, in verses 1—5, comes in ver. 6 to make mention of another vision which St. John saw, and that is of an angel flying in the midst of heaven with the everlasting gospel; which is said to be everlasting, in opposition to those innovations and

traditions of men, under which the churches of Christ had laboured a long time. This vision being past, as a right consequent of the former vision, he sees another angel, crying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," verse 8. And no wonder, for where the everlasting gospel is preached in the midst of heaven, that is openly, there Babylon falls, and falls immediately.

The words themselves are a short, and sweet prophecy of Rome's ruin and destruction. Wherein we have :

The description of Rome itself.

The description of her destruction.

She is described two ways :

1. From her *greatness*, called the great city. Indeed she hath been great in large possessions, and great revenues, so she is fallen already in a great measure, yet she is too great. Great in her opinion with kings and princes, and thus she is fallen already in a great measure, yet still too great. Great in her authority and power over the saints, and churches of Christ, and from this greatness she is much fallen already, and yet too great.

2. From her *sins* that she is guilty of, under that word Babylon. For if we consult with this book of the Revelation, we shall find that the church of Rome, and that party is called Egypt, Sodom, and Babylon, as if the wickednesses of them all were concentrated in her.

Egypt was exceeding harsh and cruel to the church, and Israel of God : so are they.

Sodom was exceeding base and filthy in corporal uncleanness ; and so are they.

Babylon full of sorceries and idolatry, so are they. She is called Babylon.

Her destruction is described, and that two ways.

1. From the fulness and greatness thereof, therefore she is said to *fall*, and not once, but again *fallen, fallen*. As it is God's way to reward those that are good with the good which they most desire ; so it is his way to punish the wicked with that punishment which is most contrariant to their dispositions, and their own humours. Babylon, and the Babylonish company most affect rising, and great preferment ; contrary their punishment shall be that it may be

most vexatious to them, they shall *fall*, their destruction is called a *fall*.

2. From the certainty thereof. It is put in the present tense, as if it were already done. The words are repeated, 'It is fallen, it is fallen.'

Hardly a word but it affords its several observation. Yet because I would not cut out more bread than we shall eat at one meal, I will fall, and close with these especially.

Antichristian and Romish Babylon is truly Babylon.

Though this Babylon be never so great, yet it shall fall. It will fall assuredly.

It is the duty of the saints, and people of God to speak of this fall as if it were done already.

Antichristian Romish Babylon, is truly Babylon. Herein I shall parallel the old and our late Babylon. I shall prove that by this Babylon is meant Rome. In the Old Testament we read of a Babylon wherein Israel was once captived, that was heathenish Babylon. In the New Testament we read here and in divers other places of another Babylon, antichristian Babylon. Give me leave to parallel them a little.

Heathenish Babylon was the metropolitan, or the chief city of the Chaldees, full of trade and merchandize, insomuch as she calls herself the queen of the world, "who sat upon many waters," Jer. li. xiii. So it is with our late Babylon, who calls herself the queen sitting upon many waters, which is also interpreted by St. John, to be "peoples, multitudes, and nations," Rev. xvii. 15.

Babylon of old was a proud people, and very confident, exceeding delicate, and very wanton, calling herself a "lady for ever," Isa. xlvii. 7, 8. Thus antichristian Babylon sits also. Rev. xviii. 7, "She hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."

This wanton and delicate place of old was full of sorcerers and soothsayers. Isa. xlvii. 12, 13, "Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth," &c. Therefore we read that in Daniel's time they came before the king to tell him the meaning of his dream, but could not. So it is with our late Babylon, wherein are many sorceries and sorcerers. Rev. ix. 21; xviii. 23.

Heathenish Babylon was exceeding full of idols and vile idolaters, the mother of them, and therefore we read, that the three children were commanded to worship the king's idol, Dan. iii. Answerably it is said of our late Babylon, that she doth "make all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication," Rev. xvii. 2.

As ancient Babylon was full of idols, and gross idolaters, so also it was exceeding cruel to the church and people of God. Ps. cxxxvii. 1, "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea we wept, when we remembered Sion," &c. Who hath not read of the Babylonish captivity, the fiery furnace, and their den of lions. Answerably in this late Babylon is "found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth," Rev. xviii. 24.

The destruction of ancient Babylon was great, and very dreadful. For,

It was universal. Isa. xlvii. 14, "There shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before." And Is. xiv. 22, "For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord."

It was very sudden. Is. xlvii. 9, "In a moment, in one day: the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in perfection."

It was irrevocable. Jer. li. 63, 64, "And it shall be when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates. And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her."

Answerably the destruction of our late Babylon is very dreadful. For,

It shall be universal. Rev. xviii. 23, "The light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee."

It shall be sudden. Rev. xviii. 8, "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, in one hour."

It shall be irrevocable. Rev. xviii. 21, "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."

Because of all these things, great sins, and great destruc

tions, the people of God were commanded to depart and go out of old Babylon. Jer. li. 6, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul." And verse 45, "My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul," &c. In like manner we find that the Holy Ghost having given warning to the world concerning the fall of this late Babylon, he exhorteth his people to go out from the midst of her, Rev. xviii. 4, "Come out of her my people," &c.

Thus are these two Babylons paralleled, certainly they are, and shall be exceeding like one to another in these particulars. But the question now is, who is here meant in the Revelation by this late Babylon; indeed this is a question of much concernment, because she is to fall, the princes of the earth are to be provoked to eat her flesh, and drink her blood, and we are all to depart from her, lest we partake with her in her plagues.

By this late Babylon therefore, we understand the church of Rome; not as confined within her walls, but as by her merchants she tradeth with, and putteth off her commodities to other kingdoms. Rome in her latitude, with all her merchants, and those that symbolize with her, is here to be understood. And that Rome and no other is here meant, I prove by these reasons:

Babylon is here in my text called "the great city," and in St. John's time, what was the great city but Rome itself? for suppose a man were in France, and should hear another say, that such and such a work were to be done in the great city, who would not know that he meant Paris? or suppose a man in England should hear another say, that some great work were to be done in the great city, who would not know that he meant London? In St. John's time the Roman empire prevailing, the great city was Rome itself; and therefore the Holy Ghost saying, that Babylon was the great city, saith expressly, that by Babylon is meant Rome.

This city and whore of Babylon, is said to sit upon a beast, Rev. xvii. 7. Now if we look into the book of Daniel, whereby much of the Revelation is to be interpreted, we shall find mention of four beasts to succeed one another, which is there interpreted to be four kingdoms or monarchies. The first of the Chaldees. The second of the

Medes and Persians. The third of the Grecians. And the fourth of the Romans. Now before John's time, the three first beasts were dead, and gone; the fourth and last only remained, the Roman empire. And what city or people hath so ridden the Roman empire, as Rome hath done?

St. John tells us, that this beast that carried the woman, this city was to have "seven heads, and ten horns," Rev. xvii. 7, which the Holy Ghost interpreted in the same chapter, saying, "These seven heads are seven mountains," verse 9, or "seven kings," that is, several sorts of government, verse 10. And the ten horns are ten kings or kingdoms, verse 12, which this empire did break into. Now though some think, whilst they look through false perspectives, that they see some other city sitting upon seven hills, yet let any man shew us these three met together in any other city. Who knows any other city whose building hath been laid on seven hills, so famous that the city itself is called *Septiros*, and whose government hath been of seven sorts, and whose empire hath been broken asunder into ten kingdoms, or thereabouts? This we know is agreeable to Rome itself, and therefore Rome and no other people is here meant by Babylon.

The Scripture is most express, telling us, *totidem verbis*, that that city which in St. John's time reigned over the kings of the earth, was Babylon, Rev. xvii. 18, "And the woman which thou sawest, is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." But in St. John's time no other city than Rome reigned over the kings of the earth, and therefore that, and that alone is truly Babylon, that is, our late Babylon. Whereupon Cornelius a Lapide, considering also how Irenæus, Lactantius, Jerome, and other ancients, speak fully to our purpose, professes that he will not *tergiversari*, but granteth, that by Babylon is meant Rome.

If so, what ill office have they done to the church and people of God, that obtrude this position upon us, That the church of Rome is a true church. But was Babylon a true church? was Sodom a true church? was Egypt a true church? Rome is Sodom, Egypt, and truly Babylon. Oh, what abundance of hurt and mischief hath this dangerous position done, that the church of Rome is a true church! I myself have known

some that had relinquished the church of Rome, and written against her, who again staggered in their faith, I wish I might not say they were revolted, when they saw this opinion countenanced, and published by great authority. And what say the papists? Your own men, say they, hold that the church of Rome is a true church, and that salvation is to be had in her; as for the church of England it is a schismatical, heretical church, wherein no salvation is to be had. The safest way therefore is to join with us, where, according to all men, both ours and yours, you may be sure of your salvation. And indeed the argument were very strong, and home, if the premises were true. But when it shall appear by Scripture, that Sion is called Babylon, and Babylon called Sion, then, and not till then will I believe that Rome is a true church. I know what some urge, namely, that antichrist, that man of sin, is to sit in the house of God, and therefore that the church of Rome is the house, and church of God. But if we consult with the original, we shall find that the words are not *ἐν τῷ ναῷ* in the house, but *εἰς τὸν ναῷ* upon, or against the house of God; so Austin, and others turn it. *Upon*; noting his tyranny and usurped government, so the coherent words also give it, "He shall sit exalting himself above all that is called God." The whole words being nothing else, but a description of his proud government and vile tyranny.

If antichristian and Romish Babylon be truly Babylon, then set yourselves in array against her round about. I mean not in way of warlike hostility, oh that all your swords were turned into ploughshares, my exhortation is no other than that of the prophet Jeremiah, concerning old Babylon, chap. 1. 14, "Put yourselves in array against Babylon, round about all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows, for she hath sinned against the Lord." It is the wisdom of every man, to observe what design God hath upon the world, a kingdom, or place, and to be in our callings serviceable, and helpful to God's designs. God will help us, if we help him. We love to be on the strongest side, and God is strongest. Now is the time that God is bearing down the walls of proud Babylon, that are raised up in every kingdom. Magistrates, ministers, people, help. Help,

oh, you that love the Lord, help the Lord, down with them, down with them even to the ground.

But what shall we do to help forward the fall of Babylon?

Either you are of public place, or private station. If you be of a private station, yet you ought to be of a public spirit. If you be of public place, give me leave to tell you out of God's word what to do, and yet I will not so much direct you to what you are not doing, as encourage you from Scripture in what you are doing.

Therefore ye worthies of our Israel, it lies upon you to search out, and inquire after this Babylonish company, and to repay them according to their demerits. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, burning for burning, ear for ear, liberty for liberty, and blood for blood." We find in the Old Testament, that if there were a noise and report of idolatry in the land, the magistrate was not barely to take information, but to make diligent search, Deut. xiii. 12—15, "If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities which the Lord thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, Certain men of the children of Belial are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods which you have not known. Then shalt thou enquire and make search, and ask diligently," &c. And in the verses before you may see their punishment, verse 6—10. And who knows not that of the Psalmist, Ps. cxxxvii. 8, 9. "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed: happy shall he be that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh, and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." Though as little ones they call for pity, yet as Babylonish little ones they call for justice, even to blood. You may think it cruel, but there is nothing cruel which God commands. Indeed father Latimer in his sermon before king Edward the sixth, is exceeding earnest, that popish prelates might be made *quondams*, as, saith he, Abiathar the high priest was, because he laboured to keep king Solomon from his throne. And behold a greater than Solomon, Christ Jesus in the government of his church is here. And there is a notable Scripture for this, Ezek. xlv. 10—15, "And the Levites that are gone away far from me when Israel went astray from me after their idols, they shall even bear their iniquity." verse 13, "They

shall not come near unto me to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things in the most holy place," &c. Whence it appears, that those which were unfaithful, superstitious, following innovations when Israel went astray and followed idols, were to be thrust from their places, and to be made *quondams* for ever. This now the magistrate may see into, I prescribe not, I leave with you this general. It is your duty to search and inquire after these persons, and to punish them according to their deservings.

It is in you also to call for days of public humiliation, fasting, prayer, and soul-affliction. It will be said this hath been done already. True, it hath been done, and much good hath been done thereby in heaven; but when a man lays his ears to the several committees, and hears what a world of evil is discovered in each committee; what filthiness, and lewdness of filthiness in this and that priest, in this and that officer; how can a man but break forth, and say, or rather sob, Good Lord, what a lamentable condition was this poor land in? Oh, that the weight of our sins should not break the axle tree of God's patience. Oh, that we are a nation to this day. And then is there not yet need of more tears, humiliation, and soul afflictions? Of all the reformed churches in the world, England hath borne the name, and worn the crown for the life and power of godliness; yet give me leave with grief of heart, and sadness of spirit, to make a challenge: What reformed church is there in all the world, that ever knew so many suspended ministers as England? Speak, O Sun, whether in all thy travels from one end of the heaven to the other, thou didst ever see so many silenced ministers as thou hast done here. And is there not then need of more humiliation, more fasting, and prayer, more self-afflictions, and more tears? I will lead you but to one Scripture, and leave it with you, Ezek. xliii. 10, 11, "Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities, and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done; shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof," &c. I know not such

another text in all the Bible, as this is for this purpose. One man says, the government of the church of England is the best; another, that the Scottish government is the best; a third, that a third is best; another, Oh, that I knew what were the government and form of God's house, prescribed by God himself. Well. Wouldst thou know? "If you be ashamed of your own iniquities, God will shew you the form of his house."

It is with you also, right worthy and beloved, to see that all the ordinances of Jesus Christ, be rendered to the churches in their native beauty, and that all the relics, and remains of Babylon be quite removed. *Opus marmoreum albario non indiget.* True marble needs no painting. And God's ordinance is all marble, no chalk, True beauty needs no colouring; and the most deformed of God's ordinances to a gracious eye, is truly beautiful. Great is the pomp of God's ordinances, when freed from pomp, great is *their* glory when freed from *ours*. Every ordinance is then best administered, when it is most effectual, and a thing is most full of efficacy, when it is *plenum sui, immixtum alieni*. As wine or water which doth most cool, or cleanse when freed from mixtures.

In the primitive times when the heathen would put the christians to a cruel death, they tied a living man to a dead man, that so by the filthy savour, and stench of the dead carcase, they might poison the living man to death; this they counted the worst of death; the death of deaths. So when the dead ordinances of man's inventions, shall be tied to the living ordinances of God's appointment; what is this, but as much as in us lies to poison the living with the dead? But I pray tell me, what unkindness hath the good ordinance of Christ done to us, that we should put it to so sad a death. And as Christ said to the Jews, "I have done many good works amongst you, for which of all these do you take up stones against me? so may the ordinances of Christ say, Oh, ye people of England, I have done many good works among you; I have converted many of you by preaching to you; I have healed many of you that were sore bruised; I have comforted many of you that were sore troubled; for which of all these do you use me thus unkindly; for which of all these do you thus tie and link me to that, which never

entered into the heart of God to match me with? What Luther says concerning preaching, that may I say, concerning all the ordinances of God. We that are ministers, saith he, think to take our people with our expressions, and if we light upon an expression that pleaseth us well, we think that it should convert every one that hears it from us; but when the auditor comes, *et hominem olet*, he smells man in the expression, turns his back upon it, and the whole vanisheth, and comes to nothing. The explication is plain and easy.

Wherefore, I beseech you, in Christ's stead, that are the heads of our tribes, that nothing be obtruded upon the churches of Christ; but what may clearly, and plainly have *Jus divinum* written and engraven upon it. Your wisdoms cannot but observe the several distractions that are both in church and common-wealth. If you analyze the distractions of the common-wealth, you may find thereby what is the head of our distractions in the church also. And in the common-wealth this is that which troubles, that proceedings are so illegal; Oh, says one, though it cost me never so much, yet if it were according to law, I would yield unto it. This is that which cuts so deep, says another, there is no law for these, and these courses: so in the church, I cannot yield to this, and that custom, this and that innovation, for there is no law for it.

But if a thing be indifferent, and authority command it, then *Jus divinum* is written upon it.

It is the wisdom of authority to preserve the churches in that liberty, wherein Christ hath left them, for authority is *Tabularum custos, non author*.

If a thing be indifferent in its own nature, and the doing thereof offensive to a weak brother, authority cannot write *Jus divinum* upon it; for to offend a weak brother is to destroy him, 1 Cor. viii. 11. And the destruction of a weak brother, is the breach of the moral law. Now we all know, that authority cannot write *Jus divinum* upon the breach of the moral law.

Solomon saith, Eccles. xii. 13, "Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." As God is an all-sufficient being for a man to live upon, so God's word is an all-sufficient rule for a man to live by. And if we look into Isa. xxx. 22, we shall find that God doth not

only command that the images themselves should be destroyed, but that "their coverings should be defiled." I remember what Master Dering said in a sermon before queen Elizabeth. There hath been much dust in the house, and though for the present the house be swept, yet the dust is but laid behind the door, and a hen will come that will spread it all abroad again. Wherefore, I beseech you take heed, that there be no dust left in the house of God in any corner. Give us the ordinances of Christ in their naked and own colours, so shall they be blest to us, we under them and you by them.

It is with you also to set up burning, and shining lights in every candlestick of the kingdom. First, that the candlestick be rightly fashioned; secondly, that the lights therein be duly settled with golden snuffers, not brazen extinguishers. This is a special help to the fall of Babylon, for ye heard from the context, that no sooner did there an angel fly through the midst of heaven with the everlasting gospel, that is, preaching openly; but another angel followed presently, crying, "Babylon is fallen." You know, that contraries have contrary consequences. Babylon was built by ignorance, therefore the papists say, Ignorance is the mother of devotion, and they say truly; for indeed ignorance is the mother of their devotion; therefore they use their friends, that the people may be put off with matins, and even-song, that so our ignorance might be an inlet to their devotion. Wherefore then let there be an angel sent, that is a ministry flying in the midst of heaven, that is openly, and not by stealth, preaching the everlasting gospel to every place and congregation, then will Babylon fall, and fall immediately.

These be your duties.

But it is exceeding hard and very difficult to do these: a perfect and full reformation is very good, and necessary, but exceeding hard and difficult.

True, but did not Abraham's sacrifice hang in the briars and bushes? Ye read that when Isaac should have been sacrificed, God provided a sacrifice, but that sacrifice did first hang in the briars. Ye are the children of Abraham, and if you would offer a sacrifice of God's own, a sacrifice that should be pleasing to him, make account that it must hang in the briars, bushes, and many difficulties.

The heathen could say, Virtue grows upon the rocks ; and if the extirpation of Babylon, with the reformation of true religion, were not a hard work, it were not fit for a parliament to do. They are met to untie such knots as none else can untie. The heathen king said to a poor man, Though this gift be too great for you to receive, yet it is not too great for me to give. Either it is of God that you are assembled, or else it is not ; if it be not why sit you here, if it be, can any thing be too hard for God ? Wherefore, let your faith laugh in the face of difficulties. For as unbelief will make a thing difficult though never so easy, so faith will make a thing easy though never so difficult.

But this work is not only exceeding hard and difficult, but very dangerous. In great reformations there must be some alterations, and alterations cannot be without danger and trouble.

There is much difference between smart and danger. If a man have rotten and aching teeth in his head, though the pulling them out be exceeding troublesome, and full of ache, and smart even to bleeding of the gums, and vexation of all the body, yet there is no danger, much smart, but no danger. So in regard of the church and common-wealth, though the pulling out of some rotten members may cause a bleeding, make trouble, and some disturbance, yet there is no danger, some ache, but no danger.

Many things seem to be dangerous at a distance, that are not so at hand. When Moses' rod was at a distance from him, it was turned to a serpent, and he fled from it ; but when he took it by the tail at God's command, it was his rod in his hand again. Prisons, banishments, miseries, at a distance are serpents to us ; when we come to them, are exceeding comfortable, and our rods in our hands.

Suppose there were danger in a reformation, and extirpation of all that is Babylon's, yet there is more danger in want of reformation. Vomiting physic is very troublesome, but disease more. He that ventures against Babylon, at the worst can but lose his life, which may be taken away by the fall of some tile, or the turning of some humour in our body ; but he that partakes with Babylon in her sin, shall partake with her in her plagues and punishments to all eternity. What a trouble did Achan cause, yet he was but

one man, his act one, and the Babylonish garment but one. Oh what trouble will it be then to suffer many Achans, and that continually? Augustine says, that when the Jews would not acknowledge Christ, lest the Romans should come, and take their place, in preventing loss, they lost most. They would not lose their earth, and they lost their heaven; they would not lose their place, and they lost their God.

But suppose that there were the most danger in the best reformation, is there not enough in heaven to pay for all? Nay, my beloved, even on this side heaven, there is no loss by Christ in losing for Christ; *non habendo habemus*, in not having, we have. I remember what was written of *fortis Zisca*, and, as my author says, written upon his tomb in his epitaph, thus, Eleven times in joining battle, I went victor out of the field, I seemed worthily to have defended the cause of the miserable and hungry, against the delicate, fat, and gluttonous priests, and for that cause to have received help at the hand of God. Mark the emphasis, it lies there, *And for that cause*. But ye have an example of Jehoshaphat, which is exceeding full, and much encouraging, 2 Chron. xvii. 3, "And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David." He brought up reformation to the first institution, and he was full therein, for it is said, "he walked in the first ways," not in the last, "of his father David," and sought not to Baalim, "Nor after the doings of Israel," verse 4. And see what followed, "Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand, and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents, and he had riches, and honour in abundance," verse 5. The prophet Haggai is most express, and bids them compute, whether that from the very day that they set their hands to the building of the temple, God did not build them up in outward mercies. Certainly, my beloved, the only way to gain, is to lose for God. It is a greater mercy to have, that I may lose for God, than that I may keep for my posterity.

But suppose that a man be in place of authority, and find that his heart is exceeding dull and dead, and backward to this work of reformation, what should he do that may give wings to his affections, that may move and quicken up his spirit in this particular?

In this case let him put himself upon the exercise of his

authority in the execution of justice. For it is with the magistracy herein, as with the ministry, the way to preach, is to preach ; the way to prayer, is prayer ; *Iter ad gratiam est gratia*, the way to grace is grace. God is pleased sometimes to come in with fresh strength, and to give new assistance in the heat of preaching. So in the acts of magistracy, God comes in also in the dispensation thereof.

In that case present your souls with that great trust that is committed to you, and put upon you. If a minister when he is handing away his precious hours between this and that play-book ; or when he is most prodigal of his people's time, for it is their's not his ; if then I say when he is most idle, and indisposed to those great services, he could but realize a congregation, and present before him the many souls that depend upon him, and as it were hear them calling out unto him : Oh, sir, study, study for our souls, study for our eternity ; certainly this would awaken, move, and put life into him. So if those that are in authority and place of magistracy, would but present themselves with those many thousands that have entrusted them with their liberties, estates, lives, I had almost said consciences, and eternities, surely it would be exceeding quickening and helpful.

Consider your present opportunity. Opportunity once lost, is never recovered. My words shall know no flattery ; never did England see a parliament more fitted for the service and work of God than this now is. A quiver so full of chosen and polished shafts for the Lord's work. I have often thought that God would deal by our present parliamentary assembly, as Samson did deal with the jaw-bone, wherewith he had slain heaps of the Philistines, which when he had done, he threw it away ; but afterwards thirsting, and being like to die for want of water, God sent him back to his jaw-bone again, and tells him that he would cleave that, and open a fountain of water to him from thence. So hath God used this great parliamentary ordinance for the slaying of many Philistines ; but, in these latter times, this jaw-bone of ours hath been thrown away, and despised in the eyes of the world ; and it may be now God will open a fountain of water from hence, that we may all be revived and live thereby. Wherefore then let all those that are of this honourable assembly think : It may be God hath raised me up to this

time, all the while I was at the university, God was laying in of abilities in my education for this occasion; and shall I lose this opportunity, *Opportunitas indicat virum*, opportunity shews the man, and makes the man, and sometimes hath the casting voice for man's eternity.

Consider this also, that if reformation be not now wrought, our sin and guilt will be greater than ever it was. This parliament time is a commencement time for good or evil; take a good work, and though it were never so private, and personal, yet if it pass in this house, it does commence national: so take an evil, and though it were never so private before, yet if it pass here, it will take a higher degree, and commence national wickedness; this is a fearful evil, and very dreadful, that a personal sin should become national. I know you are unwilling that any sin should steal its degree; as therefore you do desire that no personal sin shall become national, I beseech you in Christ's stead, let the reformation be full and perfect, and let every man say: Babylon shall fall, I also will have a hand in it, and shoulder at it. "Down with it, down with it, even to the ground."

And if you be a minister, you know your duty; only, as Luther phrases it, let your knowledge be incarnate into godly practice; good works are faith incarnate, knowledge incarnate. Now you read Joshua iii. 13, 15, 17, that when the children of Israel went through Jordan, these priests that bare the ark of the Lord, were first to enter upon the waters, and to stay in the midst of them, till all Israel passed over. The water doth note affliction, the feet of those that bare the ark are to be first in danger, and there to stand till all be over. In the place before mentioned, Ezek. xliv. 10—12, God's threatening is very terrible. As if he should say, As for those Levites that go astray when Israel goes astray, and do admit the uncircumcised in heart to mine holy things, though they be suffered in mine house, yet they shall but do the out-works thereof, as for those inward things of mine house and self, they shall not be admitted to them, nor trusted with them. Though they may preach some outward truths, which they may read of in books, yet for those inward secret heart things of the covenant, I will never trust them with them, they shall not draw near to me. Oh, therefore beloved, that we could deny our own knowledge,

wisdoms, parts, gifts, liberties, and all that is ours in this great service.

But if a man's condition and state be private, what must he do to help forward the fall of Babylon?

Take heed that thou do nothing to hinder God's public design by your private practices, put away the evil of all your doings, lest your private wickedness do *ponere obicem* to God's providence.

Achan's wickedness was committed in the dark, and with much privacy, yet what influence had it into public misery.

Miriam and Aaron murmured against Moses, and envied at him, for which she was stricken with leprosy whereby the whole congregation was stayed, and their march hindered. It is said, 2 Chron. xx. 33, that the high places were not pulled down, "because the people were not prepared for the Lord;" not because the *prince* was not prepared, or the *great ones* not prepared, but because the *people* were not prepared. It is in regard of truth, as in regard of error in this particular, though the baker may have kneaded his dough, that is, his false opinion, and made it ready, yet as the prophet Hosea speaks, and as Zanchy interprets the place, he sets not in, till the oven be heated, that is, the heart of the people warmed and prepared for it. So for a truth also, or a public mercy and deliverance, though God have provided it for a people, yet it is not handed to them, and set in, till their hearts be warmed and prepared for it. You may observe therefore, that when David had made his penitential psalm for his own sin, Ps. li., after much supplication for the pardon of his own evil, and for grace, and comfort he comes at last in the 18th verse to this petition: "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Sion," &c. How comes that in here? Yes, when a man hath once repented of his own sin, and cleared that reckoning, then he is fittest to ask mercy for the church, and till then unfit. Therefore though in regard of your own souls, your own eternity, you will not part with your own sins, yet if you have any pity, any compassion, any bowels towards your own country, or churches of God, put away the evil of all your doings.

Though your condition be never so private, you may discover the ways of Babylon, the works and complotments of the Babylonish party: and the discovery of evil is half its

ruin, as the apostle speaks, 2 Tim. iii. 9, "They shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be made manifest to all."

You may believe down the walls of Babylon. Faith removes mountains, though it be but a grain; by it the walls of Jericho fell, in the blowing of those poor rams' horns. And the walls of Jericho were built up to heaven, surely then the walls of Babylon cannot be higher. Wherefore seek out those promises and threatenings, set your heart towards them, bear yourselves upon them, urge, and press God by virtue of them, and say, though it be very unlikely that Babylon should fall, yet God hath thus and thus promised, thus and thus threatened, and he is faithful, here I will stay, and here I will wait.

You may spread the blasphemies of the Babylonish faction in the eyes of heaven. Thus did Hezekiah when Rabshakeh blasphemed, and we know how it prevailed. Great and grievous have the blasphemies been wherewith the men of Babylon have blasphemed the saints of God, and the footsteps of his anointed, which God takes as done against himself, and so repays them, Ezek. xxxv. 12, compared with the 13th verse. In the 12th verse it is said, "I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, they are laid desolate, they are given us to consume:" but in the 13th verse these words are charged upon them, as if they were spoken against God himself: "That with your mouth you have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me." Therefore at the 14th verse follows the punishment. The spreading of their hellish blasphemies, is exceeding prevalent with God, and very potent.

You may use all the interest you have in heaven, and whatsoever credit you have there, improve it, which we beseech you do now in this particular. Your prayers puts them under God's curse.

Though your condition and station be never so private, you may according to your place, curse the practices and complotments of all the enemies. Doth not Jacob seem to pronounce a curse upon the practices of Simeon and Levi, though his own children, Gen. xlix. 7, "Cursed be their wrath for it was cruel, &c., for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall." What

is the endeavour of the Babylonians, but to dig down the walls of Jerusalem, and of our protection. Oh, my soul come not thou into their secret. God hath commanded that Meroz should be cursed, and cursed bitterly; because they went not forth to help the Lord against the mighty. How bitterly then are they to be cursed, that go forth to help the mighty against the Lord.

It was a statute and a law in Israel, that if any removed the ancient landmarks, he shall be cursed. "Cursed," says the text, "shall he be that removes the ancient landmarks, and let all the people say Amen." What is the ancient landmark of England, but our laws and religion? and therefore if any man shall remove this our landmark, cursed shall he be, of the Lord cursed, and let all the people say Amen.

Whatever personal injury hath been done unto you by any of the enemies of the churches, you may, you must pass them by, so far as it is a private concernment, and you shall not lose hereby, your forgiveness hastens their ruin. For this cause, as you may read Numb. xii. 2, 3, 4, God himself took vengeance on Miriam, because Moses was a meek man. See how the mention of his meekness is brought in by way of parenthesis at ver. 3, as the cause of God's proceedings against her, ver. 4. Wherefore, my beloved, have any been wronged and injured by your and God's enemies, carry it meekly, carry it humbly, no revenge, no revenge, but all forgiveness. And have they begun to fall before you, let there be much rejoicing, but no insulting; praises, but no insulting; prayer still, but no insulting. Let your moderation be known to all, for God is at hand. These are your duties; which things if they be in you and abound, in due time Babylon shall fall, and you shall see it; for the next doctrine tells us it:

Though antichristian and Romish Babylon be never so great, yet it shall fall, and fall assuredly.

This is but equal: those that have fallen from God, shall fall by God; those that have made others to fall, shall fall themselves. Now the man of sin is the star that is fallen from heaven, who in 2 Thess. ii. 3, as some observe, is called in the abstract, *apostacy*, not an apostate, a *falling away*, not one that is fallen away, so notorious is he for sinful falling.

And as God rewards grace with his own grace, so he rewards sin with its own likeness.

How else shall Sion rise, if Babylon do not fall? It is said, when the Lord exalteth the low tree, he bringeth down the high tree, then shall all the trees of the forest rejoice. God is making way to such a jubilee, therefore Babylon must fall, and that assuredly.

Those that are too big for themselves, and cannot manage their own greatness, must needs fall. Pride goes before a fall. It is the natural genius of Babylon to be proud and great, great and proud. Babel was at first built to affront providence, that the world might be no more drowned. Afterwards says that king, in Daniel, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for mine honour?" And, Rev. xviii., saith our late Babylon, "I sit a queen," &c. They have been great, and in their own eyes great, surely therefore their own weight shall sink them.

Must not those needs fall, that are set in dark and slippery places, whom the angel of the Lord drives? Now, if ever, the places of God's enemies are very slippery, themselves in the dark, and the angel of God driving them. Therefore they shall fall, and fall assuredly.

And if so, then learn we how to take notice of, and behold these great works of God concerning the fall of Babylon, as they fall out in our generation. It is in regard of the evil that comes to evil men, as in regard of the good that comes to the good. Now when the saints do receive any mercy, their hearts stick not in it, nor their eyes on it, but they see it lying under its relation, in relation to the word and promise, saying, It is indeed a great mercy that I have a house, and place to dwell in; but God hath not only given me sweet habitation, but he hath given it me in the way of a promise, to perform the mercy promised. He hath given me wife, children, and friends, to perform the mercy promised. Nay, he hath given me Christ himself, to perform the mercy promised. Luke i. Thus they see all things lying under a promise in that relation. So also when ye see any judgment befall the enemies of God's church, you are not to look upon them as mere works of God, but to look upon them in their relations, in relation to the threatening, as lying under the threatening, and the fruits of it; and the reason hereof is

this especially, because otherwise you do not see the whole work of God, when you do see it before you. As it is said of Israel, "Yet the Lord hath not given you eyes to see," &c. Deut. xxix. 4.

As now suppose that a fool, a madman, or a beast should come into the congregation, though they should see the water of baptism, yet they would not see the sacrament, or half the sacrament, because they could not see it under its relation. Wherefore, my beloved, whenever you shall behold the hand of God upon the world, in the fall of Babylon, and his great works, that way, be sure that ye behold them under the relation, in relation to the Lord's threatening, and say: True, here is a Babylonish priest crying out, Alas, alas, my living! I have wife and children to maintain, and all is gone, my preferment is gone, my hope is gone, my place and office gone. But all this is to perform the judgment threatened. God threatened before, that he would "put it into the hearts of the princes of the earth, to eat her flesh and drink her blood," Rev. xvii. 16. Now it is in a great measure fulfilled, for her great revenues and rich livings are in part her flesh and blood. God said before, that "her merchants should stand afar off weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city," Rev. xviii. Thus is the word of the Lord fulfilled, and God is faithful.

As the fall of Babylon is very certain, so it is the duty of the saints to speak of it as if it were done already.

We are bound to honour the faithfulness of God, more than the faithfulness of any other, because other things are faithful to us, as Salvian observes, because he is faithful. We expect cooling and cleansing from the water, and that is faithful. Why? For God is faithful, he bids it be faithful to us. We expect warmth and light from the fire, and that is faithful. Why? For God is faithful, he bids it be faithful to us. In all these faithful creatures there is but a drop of God's faithfulness; and when they promise, we believe them: and shall we not believe Him, when he promises and when he threatens? When a faithful friend promises, we say it shall be; but we are to honour God's faithfulness more, and therefore to speak of the thing promised or threatened, as if it were done already.

When we do but begin a good work, God speaks of it as

done already. It is said, "By faith Abraham offered up Isaac," Heb. xi. 17; yet he did not actually offer him up, but intended it, and set himself to do it at God's command. It is said, that "Moses took his wife and son, and returned to the land of Egypt," Exod. iv. 20; yet he was but in the beginning of his return. When we have begun any good work for God, he speaks of it as done altogether. Therefore he having begun that great and good work for the churches, the fall of Babylon, it is our duty also to speak of it as if it were done already.

Let us therefore correct our manner of speaking. If any storm or trouble arise upon the churches, we are ready to break forth into despondent conclusions, saying, God is now gone, mercy gone, the ordinances gone; we were in good hope to have seen good days, the ruin of the church's enemies; but they do so prevail, as that we have no hope at all in this particular. But though the extremity of the church be never so great, and the enemies never so flourishing, we ought to say, They are fallen, they are fallen.

But how can we speak thus, when an utter improbability and unlikelihood dwells upon the business?

Yes. For when God destroys his enemies, he either takes them away by a weak hand, as Jer. l. 45, "The least of the flock shall draw them out;" or, they shall perish by their own hands, as Ps. ix. 16, "The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands;" or, they shall be destroyed without hands, as Job xxxiv. 20, "The mighty shall be taken away without hands." And is this true, may the soul say, that the enemies of the church shall perish by a weak hand, or by their own hand, or without hands; then will I never sink and despair in my heart, or give ill language to God's faithfulness, though the condition of God's churches be never so low, though the condition of the enemies be never so high.

If we are to speak of this work as if it were done already, when it is not done indeed; then how contrary are those to God's word, who say it is not done when it is done indeed: that will not acknowledge God's work, that say on the contrary, It is not fallen, it is not fallen, when it is fallen in truth. And such there shall be, who when the vial is poured upon the seat of the beast, "shall gnaw their tongues, and blaspheme the God of heaven, not repenting of their deeds,"

Rev. xvi. 10, 11. But I hope better things of you, and such as accompany salvation. Only now if there be any here, that have given any assistance to Babylon, by pen, tongue, or hand, let them repent. Oh, every one, repent you of your superstition, repent, repent you, lest you partake with Babylon in all her plagues and torments to all eternity. And remember that speech of Godtesscalchus : I am afraid to deny the truth, lest I be for ever denied by the truth. *Christus est via et veritas, non consuetudo*. Christ is the way and truth, not custom, not innovation. And if there be ever a drunkard, swearer, adulterer, sabbath-breaker, or profane person here, let him labour to get into Christ, lest when he shall see these great works come to pass, and come to pass ye shall see them shortly, with greater works of God than I have mentioned, ye may be able to rejoice in them ; whereas otherwise you will say, Aye, these be glorious works indeed, and comfortable for those that are in Christ, but I am a poor wretched drunkard, and not in Christ. Wherefore above all things get into Christ, so shall you rejoice with the felicity of God's chosen.

And if any have had any ill thoughts or words of, or against God's people, now change your words and your thoughts of them, for, for their sakes it is, that these great works are to be done. " Thus saith the Lord your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, for your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all the nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships," Isa. xliii. 14.