

SERMON XV.

THE SAINTS' HIDING-PLACE IN THE TIME OF GOD'S ANGER.

PRESENTED TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE HOUSE OF LORDS, IN THE
ABBEY CHURCH AT WESTMINSTER, OCT. 28, 1646, THE SOLEMN
DAY OF THEIR MONTHLY FAST.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORDS ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,—According to your command I have published these notes, which I humbly present to your lordships. They were once in your ear, they are now in your eye, the Lord ever keep them in your hearts. They lead to hiding love in the day of God's anger, and tell your honours where his hiding places are: and though it is better to have no storms than the best harbour; yet if it shall please God that we must put to sea again, which mercy prevent, it is good to be acquainted with a good harbour. They call for righteousness. The first part of true righteousness, is to deny our own righteousness and to seek Christ's. As, "*prima pars salutis est nullam videre salutem.*" The second part is to acknowledge and contend for the truth, the word of righteousness. Solomon bids us "buy the truth," but doth not tell us what it must cost, because we must get it though it be never so dear. "*Multi amant veritatem lucentem oderunt redarguentum,*" Aquin. ex Augustino. We should love it both shining and scorching.

And another part, is to deal justly, and to set this land free from oppressions. "Blessed art thou land (saith Solomon), where thy king is the son of nobles," Eccles. x. 17. The Septuagint reads it, *ελευθεριων*, the son of free-man. Righteousness doth not only strengthen, but nobilitate a nation and enrich it. When the officers are peace, and exactors are righteousness, then the gold and silver abounds. Isa. lv. 17.

The work of righteousness seems to be divine work, as authority itself is a beam of divine majesty: for as the sun is said to be God's peculiar, "He maketh his sun to rise," &c.; and the wind is called his, "He causeth his wind to blow," Ps. cxlvii. 18; so is righteousness also in a special manner called his, "Give thy judgments unto the king, and thy righteousness unto the king's son," Ps. lxxii. 1. "*Da judicia tua et justitiam tuam*, Ps. lxxii. 1, *habet mundus sua judicia et suam justitiam verum ita ut quod vere justum est, magis opprimatur quam promoveatur; ergo dicit Psal. da id est da illis hanc gratiam ut quod apud te justum est judicent. Quæ ut recto judicent principes et justitiam exerceant est donum Dei,*" Musculus. And if God lead your lordships into his own work, he will accompany you with his own strength. You cannot better consult honour unto your own families, and happiness unto this nation, than by causing justice and judgment to run down like mighty streams into all the countries thereof.

They call for meekness and sweetness of disposition: which being gained, you shall not need to leave your place if the spirit of the ruler rise up against you; "for yielding (saith the English, but according to the Hebrew and Montanus's translation, lenity or sweetness,) pacieth great offences." Eccles. x. 4, מרפא, *sanitas autlenitas*, Ar. Montan. None pretend more to good nature than our

gentry, and indeed I think it is a flower grows much in their gardens: but though divine nature will bring us to heaven, meek, good nature will not. It is gospel love and meekness which this sermon means. The gospel works it, and it honours the gospel. The more the gospel conquers this nation, the more love and meekness, which is so wanting, will abound. Oh, spread the gospel, and by your means let us see the angel flying in the midst of our heavens, with the everlasting gospel in his hand. Rev. xiv. 6. This is a work worthy of you. Great men should do great things, and count themselves little. "Vere magnum est magna facere et teipsum putare nihil," Euseb. Nier.

My lords, Christ hath done much for you, you must do much for Christ. The more you have in this world, the more grace it is to be of another. For outward things, afford them some relics of your love, and so much only as better things leave; for what is too cold for God, is hot enough for these things. "Toleremus potius præsentia quam deligamus." Why should not we give that unto God by an act of our faith, which he hath given unto us as a fruit of his love? Thus shall you be able to say in your lying down, as Christ spake at his death: "Father, I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, and now glorify me with thine own self," John xvii. 4, 5. Which that your Honours may do, shall be the prayer of

Your humble and most unworthy servant in the gospel of Jesus Christ,

WILLIAM BRIDGE.

"Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment, seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."—ZEPH. II. 3.

GOD never lets off his murdering pieces upon a nation or kingdom, but he doth first discharge his warning pieces; he never strikes, but he doth threaten first. For as he doth therefore strike once, that he may not strike again; so he doth therefore threaten at the first, that he may not strike at all. He promises that he may fulfil, but he threatens that he may not fulfil.

Having therefore denounced great judgments in the first chapter, he proceedeth by the prophet Zephaniah to soft and sweet exhortations in the beginning of this second.

And because men are either godly or ungodly, he begins with the ungodly, and exhorteth them to gather themselves, &c. ver. 1, 2. And for the godly, he exhorteth them for to seek the Lord, ver. 3, "Seek ye the Lord," &c.

In which words three things are most considerable:

First, The matter of the exhortation, which is, "To seek the Lord, to seek righteousness, and to seek meekness."

Secondly, The subject or persons upon whom this exhortation falls; that is, "the meek of the earth," further described to have wrought judgment.

Thirdly, The motive pressing thereunto, "It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."

For explication :

"Seek ye the Lord." That is, the Lord himself, his face, his favour, his honour. The word "seek," is used in Scripture, either more largely, for our whole service of God and endeavours after him ; or else more strictly for prayer. Here it is taken in the largest sense, because the word in the Hebrew is not לָשׂוּ , which signifies rather *verbo quærere*, Prov. xv. 14, to seek by word or petition ; but שָׁקַב , which signifies rather *conatu quærere*, to seek by endeavour.*

"The meek of the earth." The Hebrew word turned meek, signifies afflicted as well as meek, and so it is often translated, for afflictions well used are means to meeken us, and to file off the roughness and ruggedness off our disposition. But here it doth note the grace and virtue of meekness, which is *irarum moderativa*, that scripture grace whereby a man hath the command and moderation of his anger, leaving all his revenge unto God himself ; for it is the same word that is used after for meekness, which cannot be understood of affliction, but of the grace and virtue of meekness, for that no man is to seek affliction.

"Which have wrought his judgment." The word מִשְׁפֵּט judgment is used in Scripture, either for the commandments, word and statutes of the Lord, or for that evil which God doth bring upon a people in a way of justice ; in both these respects the meek may be said to work his judgments, either as obedient to the Lord's word, or as executioners of justice ; but I take it rather in the first sense.

"Seek righteousness." That is, the righteousness of Christ, just and righteous dealing between man and man : and the truth of God which is called the word of righteousness ; none more fit to seek justice and righteousness, than those that are the meek of the earth.

"Seek meekness." Yea, though they were meek before. When God calls upon wicked men, to love and seek him, as Estius observes,* he wills them to do that which they did

* בָּקַשׁ est quærere magis conatu et studio quam interrogatione aut petitione quod per שָׁאֵר significatur, i. e. petere seu rogare et si interim confundatur.—Mercer. Pagni. in Thes.

* Quæritur quo re hæc non sit supervacanea prophetæ exhortatio, cum eo ipso

not before: when he calls upon godly men to love and seek him, he wills them to do that more which they had done before. It is not enough to be habitually godly, but whatever grace we have in the habit, must be drawn forth into exercise, and though we have wrought judgment, we must do it again.

We must not think to exercise one grace alone, but there must be an harmony, mixture, conjuncture of all graces. Some are wise, but not zealous; some zealous, but not wise: some just, but not meek; some meek and sweet dispositioned, but not righteous in execution of justice. But these graces must be mixed together; and therefore saith the Lord here, "Seek righteousness, seek meekness."

"It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Ye shall surely be hidden from the wrath to come, and it may be from the wrath present. This *may be*,* says Junius, is not a word of doubting, but provoking to more endeavour: it is a half promise.

From all which words ye may observe these five notes.

First, that God hath his days of anger, there is wrath and anger with God, which upon occasion breaks forth upon the children of men.

Secondly, that in these days of anger, God is very willing for to hide, save, and defend his own people.

Thirdly, though he be willing to hide his own children in evil times, yet he doth sometimes leave them at great uncertainties.

Fourthly, when God's anger doth break forth upon the children of men, and his people at uncertainties, not knowing what will become of them; then and then especially it is their duty to seek the Lord, to seek righteousness, and to seek meekness.

Fifthly, that if any men can do any good in the evil day, it is the meek of the earth.

First, God hath his days of anger, there is wrath and anger with God.

Take anger properly for a passion, and so there is none

mansueti sunt, Dominum jam antea quæsierint? Resp. Quando impiis discitur diligite Dominum moventur facere id quod antea non faciebant; quando autem recta corde discitur, diligite Dominum monentur amplius et diligentius facere quod antea faciebant, ita cum dicitur malis et duris quærite Dominum, &c. Estius in locum.

* אֵלֵי Non dubitantis est sed sollicitudinem exacuendi. Jun. in Exod. xxxii.

with God: *ira* we say is from *ire*, because when one is angry he goes out of himself; and when he is pacified, he does *redire ad seipsum* return to himself. Thus it is not in God: Fury is not in me, saith the Lord.

If ye take anger for the effects and fruits thereof, so it is not with God as his mercy is. "His mercy is over all his works," even over the works of his anger. He is no where called an angry God, but a merciful God often. The Psalmist speaking of God's justice, and the fruits of his anger, saith, "His judgments are like the great mountains," Ps. xxxvi. 6, 7: but speaking of his goodness and mercy, saith, "It reacheth unto the clouds." What mountain doth so?

His mercy is for itself, he gives that he may give; he loves that he may love; and shews mercy that he may shew mercy: but he is not angry that he may be angry. The Lord is angry a little that he may love for ever, his very anger doth end in love.

Exod. iv. 14—16, "He is slow, the slowest to conceive a wrath, and ready to forgive:" he makes a way to his anger, but the way to mercy lies always open.*

Yet there is anger with him, he hath his days of anger. For as Aquinas says, *Excellentia irascentis est causa iræ*. The excellency of the person that is angry, is the cause of anger; the more excellency in a person, the sooner he is moved to anger, because *pervipensio* or contempt, is the greatest provocation to anger. Now there is most excellency in God, and therefore sin being a contempt of him, he cannot but be moved to anger. Anger is the dagger that love wears, to save itself, and to hurt all that wrongs the thing loved: there is love with God, infinite love in God, and therefore there must needs be anger too.

Yea, there is not only wrath, but great wrath with God. His works are like himself: if his anger fix on a person, it extendeth to all the man, soul and body. If one man be angry with another, he may afflict his body, but he cannot

* *Iratus est Dominus adversus Moysem*, Exod. iv. 14. In quo quæso furor ejus declaratur in quo ira ejus exprimitur? beneficium cognosco, non indignationem; ecce enim verse 15, pollicetur ei virum eloquentissimum in socium legationis et hunc in itinere sibi occurrurum; an hæc signa indignationis vel potius amoris? sed Deus ita liberalis est ut nesciat eis cum punire debeat non benefacere. De Haye in Exod. iv. 14, 15.

reach his soul. God's anger doth especially seize on that part, because he is a Spirit, and doth reach the spirits.

Yea, his anger doth not only extend unto all the man, but as in heaven, when he pours out his glory upon men, he doth enlarge and enable the faculty to receive his mercy, which else could not take it in, or stand under it, the weight of glorious mercy would break the very soul: so, when he is angry, and pours out his wrath upon a person, he enlarges the soul and faculty to receive, and to bear the same.

He blocks up all ways of succour and relief when he is angry, which men cannot do; his own children cannot bear the strokes of his anger, though they be strokes of love;* what are they then when they do come from hatred?

His anger gives a being to all our angers. What is the wrath of man, kings, princes, or states, but, comparatively, as the claw of the dead lion? If the lion be dead, what hurt can his claw do? It is the anger of God that puts life into all our angers. One drop of his wrath distilled into the soul is able to burst it. Who knows the power of his anger? saith the psalmist. Oh, it is great, it is infinite, it is unspeakable, it is inconceivable: and this wrath and anger of his doth sometimes break forth upon the children of men; he hath his days of anger.

He hath three houses that he puts men into: an house of instruction, an house of correction, an house of destruction. If men mend not in the first they are removed to the second, if they mend not in the second they are removed to the third. As the creditor that lends his money gratis hath his three times; his time of mere love, his time of forbearance and patience after the money is due, his time of execution and judgment after forbearance and patience is tired.

So hath God also a time when he doth freely give forth mercies to the children of men: if they improve them, well; if not, yet then he hath patience with them and forbearance; but if after long forbearance they do not mend and turn unto him, then he brings his judgment, and does execution on them. Oh, there is wrath with God: God hath his days of anger.

Therefore it is not in itself unlawful to be angry, for God

* Si Deus tam aspere percutit ubi parcit, qua aspere percutiet ubi sævit? et quanta destructione feriet quos reprobat, si sic cruciat quos amat?—Greg. moral.

is angry sometimes ; only your wrath and anger must be in order to reformation, as God's is. " Be angry (says the apostle) and sin not : let not the sun go down on your wrath." The beer or drink may be good in the cup over-night, but if it stand all the night, it sours in the cup : so will your anger sour that stands all night in your hearts, which you lie in. Smoke may be borne whilst it goes up in the chimney, but if it break out into the house or room, it is most offensive : so is your anger too, yet it is not in itself unlawful to be angry.

Again, If there be wrath with God, and great wrath, how infinitely are our souls bound unto Jesus Christ, by whom we are delivered from the wrath to come, 1 Cor. v. 18, by whom we are reconciled to God the Father, and made friends to him ; and being friends, his very wrath and anger are our friends also. As when a man is my friend, not only his power is my friend, his love is my friend, his purse is my friend ; but his sword is my friend. So when God is my friend, not only his wisdom is my friend, his power my friend, and mercy my friend ; but his wrath and anger are my friends also. Now suppose that one of you should be much in debt, so as not able to pay, and being arrested and carried away into prison, a man should come and pay all your debt, only desiring that you would love him, and now and then go unto the prison to behold what he had delivered you from ; would you not do it ? Thus it is with Christ : you were all indebted, and so deeply that you were not able to pay ; Christ hath paid our debt, and holds forth his empty veins, saying, Behold, these are the purses that I have emptied to pay your debt ; only, I will that you love me, and look now and then upon the wrath and anger from which I have delivered you. Shall we not then love him ? Oh that our hearts were inflamed in love unto Jesus Christ !

I have read of a certain monk, that being in a town where there was a great fire, and divers of the houses and families escaping, he ran up and down the town, saying to delivered persons, *Deo gratias pro te ; Deo gratias pro me* : God be thanked for thee ; God be thanked for me : God be thanked for thee, and God be thanked for me. Now this kingdom hath been all on fire, and we that are here, as so many fire-brands pulled out of England's burnings. Who may not run up and down, saying, God be thanked for thee, and God be

thanked for me? But what is this fire to the fire of God's eternal wrath? and this we are delivered from by Christ. Oh, blessed be God for Christ, for his love in Christ.

Again, If there be wrath with God, and great wrath, which after forbearance breaks forth upon the children of men; then we see what great and just cause there is why those that are in place should send forth godly and faithful preachers into all the parts of this kingdom that may preach the gospel of peace. Every godly, faithful minister, preacher, is an under officer to Jesus Christ, a reconciler: "We beseech you, in Christ's stead, be reconciled," says the apostle, 1 Cor. v. 19, 20. Thousand and ten thousand souls in this kingdom that lie under wrath. Oh, that God would effectually stir up your hearts to send forth more labourers into this harvest. The harvest is great, the labourers few, but the work is necessary, for poor ignorant souls to be delivered from the wrath to come. What though every formality cannot be had now which you would have at another time? Sure it is necessary that men and women should be delivered from the wrath to come.

Melancthon* makes mention of two certain persons in Austin's time, that were in a ship which was like to perish in a storm at sea, the one very godly but yet not baptized, the other baptized but excommunicated; there being no other christian in the ship with them, and they fearing they should be both cast away, knew not what to do in that condition; he that was not baptized desired baptism by the hands of him that was excommunicate, and he that was excommunicated desired absolution from the other, and so it was concluded; whereupon the question was moved, whether these acts were valid and good.

Austin commended the actions, which I only mention to

* Augustin. ad Fortunatum narrat. historiam quæ continet eruditam disputationem; ait enim in una nove fuisse quendam pium, sed nondum baptizatum verum *κατηχουμενον*, et alterum baptizatum, qui tamen lapsus et si cuperat poenitentiam agere, tamen nondum erat absolutus, quod juxta veteres canones irrogabantur poene exempli causa ante absolutionem. Addit Augustin. præter hos neminem ibi fuisse christianum; quum autem naufragium timerent, petit *κατηχουμενος* ab illo altero baptismum; qui cum isti impertiisset baptismum, visissim ab eo petit absolutionem; proinde quæritur an hæc administratio sacramentorum valuerit? Augustinus recte respondet valuisse; et quidam hanc historiam tantopere commendat ut dicat neminem tenere lachrymas posse qui eam audiat. disput. P. Melanch.—Lutheri Opera, tom i. 443. Wittebergæ 1558.

shew what men of judgment think lawful in case of necessity. I plead not for the like action: but now, if ever, there is a time of necessity, when some things may be done which are not ordinary. Do not ye hear the souls of poor, ignorant people crying from several countries, Help, O parliament! Help, O nobles! Help to deliver us from the wrath to come! And blessed are those persons that have a hand in so good a work as this.

Secondly, You may observe from the words, that in days and times of God's anger, he is exceeding willing to hide his own people; therefore he exhorteth them to the hiding means. "Seek ye the Lord," &c.

"Come, O my people," says the Lord by the prophet Isaiah, chap. xxvi., "enter into your chambers, and shut the doors about you, hide yourselves till the day of mine indignation be overpast."

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," says Christ, foreseeing the day of anger that was coming, "how often would I have gathered your children as a hen gathereth her chickens?" The hen doth, therefore, gather her chickens under her wings, that they may be hid from danger. Christ says, he would often have done it: "How often would I," &c., Luke xix 41. And that it may appear he was very willing, the text tells us that he wept over Jerusalem when he spake these words. Children weep upon all occasions, wise men seldom. It was some great matter that made Christ weep: here Christ weeps; and why? but because they would not be hidden. Yet this people a wicked and an ungodly people. Oh, how willing is he, then, for to hide the saints!

If he be so willing to hide his own children, how is it that so many of his dear servants have fallen in these late wars: some spoiled, wasted in their estates, some maimed in their bodies, some killed by sword: if God be willing to hide his people, why then so many exposed to dangers?

God will never sell away his people or their comforts but for a valuable consideration. Nothing of his children not dear unto them; their lives dear, their estates dear, their names dear: he will have a valuable consideration for whatever they lose; though they do lose for present, yet they do and shall gain thereby.* God knows how to deliver from

* *Mercatura est quædam, minora amittere ut majora lucreris.*—Parisiensis.

danger by danger, from death by death, from misery by misery. *Perjisssem nisi perjisssem.* I had been spoiled, unless I had been spoiled; wasted, unless I had been wasted; * undone, unless undone; and died, unless I had died, may many say. God can provide a chamber of preservation in the belly of destruction, as he did for Jonah in the whale's belly; and make the very miseries of his people to be a tender midwife to their great happiness. We do not always see the fence that is about Job: the devil saw it when Job's friends did not. God can and doth hide by cobwebs. I have read or heard of one of our English soldiers, when we went against some part of Spain, that when the Spaniards came down on our men to have cut them all off, crept under the stairs, into a hole there; the enemy seeking for him, came to the place, and finding a cobweb made over the mouth of the hole where he lay, said, Surely there are none here; so went away, and the poor man escaped. God hath many such cobwebs: and that which we look upon as a mere cobweb, in which is no strength or shelter, God can and doth hide his people by.

Indeed, much of the saints' preservation is put into the hand of angels. And we read, in Ezekiel i., that their hands are under their wings; that is, work in an unseen way: yet work they do, and bear them up in their arms, hiding, preserving and keeping them by God's commission. God is very willing, then, exceeding willing to hide his own people in evil times.

Behold a shelter in the time of a storm: who would not fly to it? Shall God be willing to hide us, and shall not we be willing to be hidden by him? I know men will say, they are willing to be hidden; who is not willing to be hidden by by God? But, *qui vult finem, vult media, &c.* He that wills the end, in sincerity, wills the means also. And if indeed, you be willing to be hidden by God, observe who those are whom God hath hidden, or doth by promise engage for to hide, and labour to be like to such.

Those that hide the saints of God are sure to be hidden by God. Two sorts of evil times there are, as in Noah's days there were two floods; the flood of profaneness, which did first drown the world; and the flood of God's anger in water. And in our times, before the last flood and deluge of

* Christus ut bonus medicus aliquando non facit voluntatem ut faciat sanitatem.

blood broke out, there was a flood of superstition and wickedness, that had covered even the mountains of this kingdom. So in all times. And the first flood is the herald of the second. If a man shall provide an ark for God's children in the day of the first flood, God will provide an ark for him and his children in the day of the second flood.

Ebedmelech hid Jeremiah, as the prophecy of Jeremiah tells us, in the day of the king's anger; and therefore God hid him in the day of God's anger.

Rahab hid the spies; and God hid Rahab and her family.*

As God doth punish men in their own kind, so he doth reward men: both punishments and rewards have the names of their sins and graces engraven in their foreheads.

Our dear brother Joseph, (I mean Jesus Christ, who is not ashamed to be called our brother, as the apostle speaks,) will be sure to put our own money in our sack's mouth. God will hide every hiding Obadiah.

Again, Those that keep the word of God's patience, have a promise to be hidden by God: Rev. iii. 10, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, therefore I will deliver thee from the hour of temptation, which will come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." The word of God's patience, I take to be the truth which the saints suffered for in their time. Sometimes the saints suffer for one truth, and sometimes for another. In the days of Luther, the word of God's patience was, justification by faith alone, and of free grace. In the days of queen Mary, the word of God's patience was, The pope is antichrist, bread is not transubstantiated. Now, says the Holy Ghost, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will keep thee," &c.

Those are sure to be hidden by God in evil times, that fear not the fears of men, nor say a confederacy with them that say a confederacy. There are always confederacies against Christ, his cause and his children; and some out of fear are apt to be drawn into those confederacies. See what God says in this case: Isa. viii. 12, "Say ye not a confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy;

* Si Rahab meretrix salutem consecuta est, cum omni domo sua, quia ducis a Deo missi exploratores semel excepit: quid ille consequentur qui Deum ipsum intra mentis suæ domum frequenter devote receperit? Heb. ii. 2.

neither fear ye fear, nor be afraid." Verse 13, "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." What then? Then at verse 14, "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." That is, for those that did say a confederacy; but as for those that did not say a confederacy, the Lord would be a sanctuary unto them.

Those are sure to be hidden by God, that remain green and flourishing in their religion, notwithstanding all the scorching heats of opposition that do fall on them. We read in Rev. ix., that an angel opening the bottomless pit, much smoke ascends, and out of the smoke came locusts like scorpions to destroy, but they might destroy no further than their commission reached; and their commission extends not to the green things. Verse 4, it was commanded them they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree. Some that are dried and withered in their profession; great professors they have been, and are now declined and withered; these may be hurt in the day of the locusts, but whoever remains green may not be touched.

And the text tells us, that the meek of the earth shall be hidden by God; they have a half promise here, and a whole promise in other places of Scripture.

Where is the person, therefore, that is thus qualified? You may go to God, and say, I confess, Lord, I am not worthy to be hidden by thee, I have sinned as others; yet through thy grace, I and my family have been an hiding place to thy children, I have kept the word of thy patience, not feared men's fear, nor said a confederacy with them; I am yet green in my profession, not so strong as the green tree, but yet green as the grass, not withered; and I do apply my soul to the ways of meekness: now, Lord, let me be hidden in this evil day that is come upon us. And, my beloved, as ever you desire to be hid in the day of God's anger, get your souls in-arked in all these promises and scriptures.

Thirdly, Ye may observe from the words, that though God is willing to hide his own people in evil times, yet he doth sometimes leave them at great uncertainties, that they may

not know what shall become of them, only with a may be, of their salvation.

They have more than a may be, for their eternal salvation. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," saith Job. "I am persuaded (saith Paul) that nothing shall separate me from the love of God," &c. Indeed God suffers his own children sometimes, to labour under many doubtings* and fears about their eternal salvation. Luther tells us of one, that lived a very gracious and holy life, yet when he came to die, being filled with doubtings, some of his friends came to him, saying, Sir, what need you be troubled, you have lived most exactly and graciously. True, saith he, I have indeed in your eye, but the eye of man and of God differs; God's judgment is one, and man's judgment another, and therefore now I do fear to die.† But there is an insuring office set up in the gospel, as to the venture of our eternities. "These things have I written (saith John, 1st Epist. v. 13) that ye may know that ye have eternal life." Not that ye may have eternal life, but that ye may know that ye have it.

But as for our temporal and outward salvation, God doth sometimes leave his people to a may be. So here; and in Joel ii. 14, "Who knows if he will return, and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?" and Exod. xxxii. 30, "Peradventure (saith Moses) I shall make an atonement for your sin."

God loves to have his people trust to the goodness of his nature. If you have a man's word or promise for a kindness, then you trust to his promise. If you have his promise, you say, But he is full, and rich, and of a good nature, and therefore I will venture on him. And is there not infinite sweetness and goodness of nature in God?‡ As God would have us trust sometimes unto his promise, so unto the goodness of his nature; and therefore sometimes he gives but a may be. We are at great uncertainties with God; and when we are left unto uncertainties, then we think and say, Aye, this is just, I have been at uncertainties with God,

* Fidei certitudo importat firmitatem adhesionis, non semper quietationem intellectus.—Parisiens.

† Alia sunt Dei et hominum judicia.

‡ Amat Deus; non aliunde hoc habet, sed ipse est unde amet; et ideo vehementius amat quia non amorem tam habet quam hoc est ipse.—Augustin.

sometimes praying, and sometimes not, and it is fit he should be so with me, that I may be minded of mine own sin.

The more uncertain a man is, the more, if not ingenuous, he will fear; and the more a man fears before the Lord, the more he will fly unto God: *timor nos fecit consiliativos*.

Truly we are not ingenuous enough towards God; were we more ingenuous, we should improve our assurance unto greater obedience. Therefore God is fain to rebuke our want of ingenuousness, and this uncertainty carries a report of it.

But suppose it be so, that in evil times we shall not be able to say what shall become of us, what is our duty then?

The fourth doctrine tells us, and so I come unto that, which is,

Fourthly, When the tokens of God's anger are abroad, and his people know not what will become of them, but have only a *may be* for their deliverance, then, and then especially, it is their duty for to seek unto God.

As the motions of the earth are guided and governed by the motions of the heavens; and the earth's fruitfulness depends on the heaven's influence: so do the motions of our hearts and lives, and all their fruitfulness, depend on the influence of God. When the scales are even, gold-weight, then is a fit time to put in some grains of prayer: who knows but that one prayer then may turn the scales?

It is the duty of all the saints, in days of God's anger, and uncertain times, to commit their ways unto God. I will tell thee, saith Job's friend to him, what I would do in thy case, "Unto God would I seek, unto God would I commit my cause," Job v. viii. "Commit thy ways unto God, and thy thoughts shall be established," saith Solomon, Prov. xvi. 3.

And indeed, there is no such way to establish our thoughts or kingdom, as to commit our ways unto God. Luther hath a notable story to this purpose: There was, saith he, a great contest between a duke of Saxony and a bishop of Germany, insomuch as the duke intended war against him; but before the war, he would send out a spy, to observe the bishop's actions and motions; and the spy being returned, Come, saith the duke, what is the bishop a doing? Oh, sir, saith he, you may easily surprize him, he lives without fear, idle, doing nothing, making no preparations for war. No,

said the duke, but what said the bishop then? He saith he will feed his flock, preach the word, visit the sick; and as for this war, he will *totius belli molem Deo committere*, he will commit the whole weight and bulk of the war unto God himself. Aye, saith the duke, then *bellum ei inferat diabolus, non ego*; then let the devil wage war against him, for I will not. Thus faith turns away the fury of the sword; and committing our cause unto God, turns away the anger and wrath of God. But a man cannot commit his cause unto God, unless he doth seek unto God; and therefore, when his anger is abroad, and people at uncertainty, then it is their duty, then and then especially for to seek unto him.

By this truth we know now what we ought to do.

Your thoughts may prevent me, and say, But the wrath and anger of God is pacified toward us, and this nation: is not the war at an end; are not our swords fully beaten into plough-shares?

Now I would to God it were so; and long, oh, long may you sit under your vines and fig-trees, praising the name of your God: yet give me leave to tell you three reasons why I conceive that God is angry with us still, the day of his anger not yet done.

1. The plague is begun. The beginnings of a plague are the signs of God's anger. "Run in quickly," saith Moses, "wrath is gone forth, the plague is begun," Num. xvi. 46.

2. I cannot but think God is angry with us still, because we are so angry with one another. When God is reconciled to a people, they are reconciled among themselves: our reconciliation an emanation of his. Then the lion and the lamb lie down together: then the sucking child plays on the hole of the asp. Then envy,* the root of all division, and the wrath of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah ceaseth, Isa. xi. Our love is a reflection of God's love. His love is the cause of our love; but our love is the sign of his love: so contrary. You may observe therefore what the Lord saith by Micah, chap. vii. 5, to this purpose, "Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide, keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom." These are treacherous times, and wrathful times. For, saith he, verse 6,

* Tolle invidiam et tuum est quod habeo, tolle invidiam et meum est quod habes.

“the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are they of his own house.” Here is anger indeed, much like that of our times. But what is all this to God's anger? Yes, says he, verse 9, “I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.” Where these things are in this posture, there is God's indignation.

You know the parable in Matt. xviii., “A certain servant owed his master a thousand talents, and said, I will go to my Lord, and say, Have patience with me and I will pay thee all, which he did, and his master forgave him. But then he meets with his fellow-servant that owed him an hundred pence: and when that servant said the like words unto him, which he spoke unto his master, he took him by the throat, and cast him into prison, which (says the parable) his Lord hearing of, was wrath.” Beloved, God hath forgiven us a thousand talents: our fellow-servants owe us some lesser sums, and we cannot forgive them, but take them by the throat; surely our Lord and Master cannot but be angry still.

3. I cannot but think that God is angry with us still; because the former sins that God hath been punishing all this while, do still live among us: live in their principles, live in the spirit of them, live in their practises under other names and notions: old sins walking up and down under new clothes.

Three great sins there are for which God hath been contending with us for divers years. Idolatry and superstition. Opposition of the saints, and the power of godliness. Oppression and injustice. I know that for oaths and drunkenness, and adultery, the land hath mourned: but these three named, are the great capital sins that God doth usually draw out the sword against nations for.

Now I appeal to you: doth not idolatry and superstition live in the principle of it? Give me leave to instance in one particular: the superstitious men of the former times, commanded bowing before altars, at the name of Jesus, and before bread in the Lord's supper. But I pray, What was the principle whereby they forced their superstitions but this? That God commandeth the worship both of soul and

body ; and it is in the power of the church to determine all circumstances : time and place are left to the church : and therefore when he come, said they, at the table, then ye shall bow. Not that we command the worship itself, that is commanded by God ; we only command the time.

And so, when ye hear the name Jesus mentioned ; and so when the bread comes before you in the Lord's supper. Now though our altars and groves be broken down ; doth not this principle still live too much in our bosoms, that God commandeth the substance, and the circumstance is left unto men ?

As for opposition to the saints, and the power of godliness ; I confess it doth not run in the same channel as before. Before, profane men opposed the saints, and opposed professors ; but now professors, oh, that I might not speak it, oppose professors. And is this more pleasing to God, that professors should oppose professors, than that profane men should oppose them ?

As for oppression and injustice. What mean those cries out of several countries, and parts of this kingdom, of the widows and fatherless, Give me my husband's wages, or give me my husband again ? Oh, give me my father again, or give me my father's wages ? What mean those complaints of some, of many : We have borne the heat of the day and are no more kindlier used, or respected, than those that have been the most enemies ? We ventured our whole estates in the beginning of this war, for this cause, and yet we are taxed as heavily as if our estates were all in our hands ? Aquinas' rule is good, *Peccatum majus ubi specialis repugnantia inter peccantem et peccatum*. The sin is the greater where there is a special repugnancy between the sin and the sinner. Injustice is naught in all, but worst in a judge, or court of justice. Darkness is terrible, but when it falls upon the vessels of light, as in the eclipse, it is more terrible than the darkness of the night. And is there no injustice now in our courts of justice or in our committees in town or country ? I wish I might not say the same sins live still, but disguised, and clothed in other habits : before the saints opposed under one name, and now under another ; I cannot therefore but say, God is angry with us still, the day of his anger is not done. And is this nothing to you, oh, all

you that hear the word of the Lord this day, that God is angry still? When the lion roars, all the beasts of the field tremble: "The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion:" what then is the wrath of God the King of kings?" What more cutting word to the heart of an ingenuous child, than to say to him, Your father is angry? Oh, you that are the children of God, I tell you your father is angry, your heavenly father is angry still.

And as for the uncertainty of our condition: who knows or can say, what shall become of us? Some think the sword is dead, others no, but it sleepeth; some think, the three years and a half for slaying the three witnesses are over: others think no, that they are yet to come: some think the war is at an end, others think not. Whenever were the people of God at greater uncertainties than now they are?

What shall we do in this case?

The text points us unto three things.

Seek ye the Lord himself: not his goods, but his goodness; not his, but him.* If a poor condemned malefactor cry loud in the ears of the judge, though he useth many sweet appellations, Good my Lord, and the like, yet the judge regards him not; for, saith the judge, these are not out of love to me, but only thus he pleads and cries, and gives good words for to save himself. So saith God also, when we come before him in prayer and fasting; True, this people cry aloud, but it is for themselves, for their little ones, their substance, their corn, their wine, their oil, it is not for my name, and out of love unto me; and so he regards it not, though we cry loud, and fast often. Wherefore, seek ye the Lord himself, oh, all ye meek of the earth, that have wrought judgment, seek the Lord himself.

Again, would you know what to do in the day of God's anger, and uncertain times? Seek righteousness.

The righteousness of Christ: "He is the Lord our righteousness, when the Assyrian treads in the land," saith the prophet. "He shall bring peace, and raise up seven shepherds, and eight principal men:" seven is a note of perfection, that is abundance of help. He is that Shiloh,

* Hoc affectu ut desiderio colendus est Deus ut sui cultus ipse sit merces: nam qui Deum ideo colit ut aliud magis quam ipsum habeat, non Deum colit, sed illud quod assequi concupiscit.—Augustin.

who should give peace when the sceptre should depart from Judah. He is that Prince of peace, the great Mediator between a distanced God and us. When the sea rages he will say to it, "Be still;" though the disciples say, "Lord, carest thou not that we perish?" His wounds are the cities of refuge. "If his anger be kindled, yea, but a little, blessed are all they that trust in him:" so we read it; or, as some better, "that betake themselves unto him." Is this therefore a day of God's anger? Come, oh, come unto Jesus Christ that ye may be hidden by him. You will say, Oh, but I have been a great sinner, a drunkard, a swearer, unclean, opposer, scorner, and a very rebellious wretch.

But doth not the psalmist say, "He hath received gifts for men, even for the rebellious also?" *Psa. lxxviii. 18.* Not only for sinners, but for rebellious sinners even for the rebellious also. Hath he not made an invitation to all? Doth not the proclamation run general, "Ho, every one that thirsteth come?" Hath not he himself said, "Those that come unto me, I will in no wise cast out?" Yea, hath he not said, "Every sin and blasphemy," except the sin against the Holy Ghost "shall be forgiven unto men?" yea, though it be such a sin as boils up unto blasphemy? And hath he not said, "Look unto me from all the ends of the earth and be saved?" Oh, therefore, whatever your lives have been, whatever course you have run, come unto Jesus Christ: come poor, sinful, vile wretch, come and be saved for ever. Do not come unto Christ that you may live wickedly; nor think to be first holy, that you may come unto Christ; but come unto Christ that you may be holy. Seek the Lord and his righteousness in this respect.

Again, Seek righteousness, in opposition to all injustice and oppression. If private men, seek righteousness in all your dealings. The righteous just God, loveth righteous dealings. If magistrates, seek righteousness in opposition to all oppression: and if the cause of the poor and of Christ come before you, say not, Go away, and come again, when it is in the power of your hand to help them.

Surius* tells us of a certain poor woman that came to Ba-

* *Mulier pauper Basilum adiit, et ab eo literas petiit ad perfectum regionis, tanquam qui apud illum plurimum posset; arrepta charta, scripsit in hæc verba, accessit ad me ista muliercula, inops, dicens litteras meas apud te pondus ha*

sil, desiring him to write to the governor of the place for favour: I am greatly taxed, and I know, saith she, that your letter may do me a great deal of pleasure: he writes; and says he in his letter: This woman tells me, that my letter hath weight with you: if so, then I pray help her. The governor returns this answer, I would with all my heart have helped this woman for your sake, but I cannot, she is under such and such taxes, I cannot relieve her. Well, says Basil, in his reply, *Si adsit voluntas, &c.* If you had a will, and wanted power, it is tolerable: but if you had a power, and wanted will, God will bring you into a poor condition. Afterward, through the disfavour of the emperor, this governor was thrown into prison, and then he sent to Basil to intercede for him, which he did, and after six days he was delivered: and then he comes to Basil, and shews twice as much favour to the woman then, as she desired before. So apt are men in place to say, we cannot help, when they will not.* Take heed of that. And take heed of delaying justice; for sometimes the very delay of justice, is injustice. Know we not, that thrones are established by righteousness? and so kingdoms. “The mountains (saith the Psalmist) shall bring peace unto the people, and the little hills by righteousness.”

Oh, therefore, as you desire that this our kingdom may be established in peace, seek righteousness: and let it come to us by you that are the mountains and nobles of this land: yea, even by you also that are the lesser hills of this kingdom, “seek ye the Lord and his righteousness:” righteousness, righteousness we cry for, that the oppressed may be relieved, the wicked punished, and the poor saints in all parts of these kingdoms refreshed. And if righteousness be out of sight, and as it were lost, yet seek it. Seek righteousness, in opposition to all injustice.

bere; si sic est, id fac ostendas; tradidit mulieri chartulam quam illa obtulit præfecto, at ille sic rescripsit, hac causa libens essem misertus mulierculæ, sed non potui eo quod subiaceat tributis; cui rursus Basilius ita replicavit, si quidem voluntas prompta fuit, sed de fuit facultas, tolerabile quidem est; si autem potuisti et noluisti, Christus te in ordinem inopum rediget; quod quidem re ipsa evenit; nam non multo post imperatoris ira in illum concitata, in vincula coniectus est; hinc vero preces offert Basilio ut sua intercessione imperatoris clementiam ipse conciliet, idque sic fastum; post sex namque dies jussus est a vinculis absolvi, &c. Sur. 1. Tom. in vita Basil.

* Non est dicendus velle quicum potuit non fecit.

Again, seek righteousness in seeking the truth. The truth and gospel is called "the word of righteousness," Heb. v. ; Isa. xxvi. The righteous nation are expounded in the same verse, to be such as do keep the truth. When truth falls in the city or streets, God's anger breaks forth ; when truth is raised up again, then God is pacified. Is the Lord angry with us now, and would you know what to do in this day of God's anger ? Seek the truth, seek righteousness in this respect.

Only in seeking this part of righteousness, take these rules along with you :

In seeking the truth, do not despise any truth because it is called old, nor neglect any truth because it is called new. It is a sign that men mean to sleep, when they draw the curtains about them, and will have no more light to come in. The reapers of the former reformation, could not so bind up all ears of corn into their sheaves, but there will be some ears left for the poor that come after to glean up.

Again, in seeking the truth, be as plain, sincere, open-hearted as ever you can. *Veritas stat in aperto campo.* Truth stands in the open fields, in this sense. Truth knows no bushes, no houses, no relations. Christ who is truth, said, Woman, not mother, as knowing no relations in matters of religion. It was indeed the speech of one heathen, *Facite me Romanum episcopum et ero protinus christianus.* Make me bishop of Rome, and I will be presently a christian. And now, many men will know no more truth, than what can grow upon their own land. Some would have the truth come down to them and to their interests ; some will bring up their interest to truth. Ever let my soul cleave unto those that can lay down all their engagements, relations and comforts, at the feet of truth.

In seeking truth, rest not upon any means though it be never so great, nor despise any means though it be never so small. *Sanctorum minima Deo placent maxime.* God loves the saints' minniums, and delights to reveal his truths to those that are most unlikely. The great truth of the incarnation, first revealed to shepherds. The great truth of the resurrection, first revealed to Mary, a woman. And when Christ came, and gave the world a taste of his kingdom, riding upon an ass' colt : the multitude, who were then counted cursed

with the disciples, cry out, Hosanna, and own him ; when at the same time, the scribes and pharisees in council make an order and decree to apprehend him, John xi. 53 ; with John xii. 12 ; and Matt. xxi. 8, 9. God loves to take those things and persons that stand behind, and to bring them before. The temple is refused, and the synagogue is kept. In the Jews' time, when any were proselyted, they were washed and circumcised ; the great ordinance of circumcision was laid aside, and washing advanced unto a sacrament of baptism. At the passover, they had their ordinary supper and the paschal lamb : the use of the paschal lamb laid aside, and bread and wine, which was used in the ordinary supper, exalted to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Thus God exalts low things, and lays by greater. I speak not this that men should neglect the ministry ; preachers' lips shall and do preserve knowledge ; but rest not on means, though they be never so learned ; despise not means, though they be never so unlearned. Who more despised for want of learning than the Waldenses,* and yet the first blessed instruments of reformation.

In seeking truth, " look not to gather grapes on thorns, or figs on thistles ;" to find the scions of truth upon a crab-stock of error or carnal principles.

They write of the partridge, that if one hen lay the egg, and another hatch the bird, it will return to the true mother when it is well grown. And this, saith Drusius Caminus Jerome, is the meaning of that in Jer. xvii. 11, " As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not ; so he that getteth riches and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool." But this we know certainly, that though an hen sit on a raven's egg, yet when the young raven is hatched, and its wings well grown, it will fly away and leave the hen in the lurch. So will all carnal principles deal by spiritual truths. Oh, therefore, let not any gospel truth be planted on a legal principle ; not a spiritual truth on a carnal or mere philosophical principle ; not a truth of Christ on an antichristian principle.†

* Vide Hist. Waldens.

† Ex philosophorum principiis omnis hæresis animatur ; omnes hæreses ex philosophorum regulis constant, cum dogmata hæreticorum frigent et volare non possunt, sedem sibi et requiem inter Aristotelis spineta reperiunt.

Again, In seeking the truth, do not so hold the greater as to neglect the lesser ; do not so seek the lesser as to forget the greater. Indeed, no truth of the gospel purchased by Christ's blood is small or little, though comparatively with others it may be called so.

And here I cannot but say I have seen a sore evil under the sun, men losing their religion in seeking for religion ; losing the power of religion in seeking for the due form : others losing the right form and circumstantial in resting upon fundamentals. We have enough to bring us to heaven, what need we more ? say some.* Would you therefore so seek the truth as you may find it ? do not forget your old acquaintance, those great and precious truths which nursed you in the cradle of your godliness ; the great truths of Christ, the power of godliness, and humiliation for sin committed. And take heed that you do not look awry, or cast a proud look on small truths, yea, though strangers, for some have entertained angels by receiving these strangers. Every truth is a stranger at the first. What truth was ever received but was first opposed ? Christ and his gospel is first a little stone, then a great stone, then breaking the mountains, then filling the world. Hold, therefore, your old fundamental truths, yet so as you may raise your buildings. Seek your buildings, yet so as you may keep foundations. Thus seek the truth, this part of righteousness.

And, again, If you would know what to do in the day of God's anger, so as to be hidden ; seek meekness : righteousness and meekness.

And so I come unto the fifth and last doctrine.

Fifthly, That if any man can do any good in the day of God's anger, either for himself or others, it is the " meek of the earth ;" therefore the text calls on them especially for to seek the Lord.

The meek of all other men have the promise of the earth. "The meek shall inherit the earth." This promise, or spring, rises in the Old Testament, the head of it is there, and runs down into the New : " Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," Matt. v. It seems this entail was not cut off by the coming of Jesus Christ.

* *Minime bonus est qui melior esse non vult ; et ubi incipit nolle fieri melior, ibi definit esse bonus.*

The meek of all other men do most honour Christ, the way of Christ, and the gospel. The heathens had this notion amongst them, as Lactantius reports,* that the way to honour their gods was to be like to them; and therefore some would be wicked, counting it a dishonour to their god to be unlike to him. I am sure we have a meek and sweet dispositioned Saviour: "Learn of me (saith he) for I am meek and lowly." A physician and surgeon, who as he hath a quick eye, so a mild heart and a tender hand. The more meek a man is, the more he is like to him, and honours him. What says the world? Aye, there is a man of a humble, quiet and sweet disposition; if all professors were such, then I would become one too.

A meek person leaves his cause to God, and his revenge to him; is led by the hand of God, *mansuetus quasi manui assuetus*: and when men do, and are so, God comes in quickly for their relief. Aaron and Miriam rose up against Moses, Moses is silent, carries it meekly, and the text says, Num. xii. "Then God arose, and was very angry." And the reason is given, because Moses was the meekest man. A meek man is subject to God in all conditions, gives up his matters to him, and so God takes himself engaged for his succour.

Again, The meek person above all others is most fit for the service of God. If I would convey a reproof, or a reprehension into the heart of a man, a meek and sweet disposition is the most fit for to do it with. If I would convey a comfort or consolation into a man's heart, a meek disposition is most fit for that. Christ gave the gospel, and he was meek; Moses gave the law, and he the meekest man upon earth in his time. So that whether law or gospel, it is best handed into the heart by meekness. I may with a soft breath blow a feather further than with strength of arm I can throw it. God loves those that are like himself. The Holy Ghost is compared to a dove, Christ is called a lamb, the Father, love itself in the abstract; no wonder, then, that a meek person, being so like to God, hath so great an interest and credit in heaven.

And if these things be so, how little is this poor nation and kingdom beholding to those that are of a froward, harsh and perverse spirit; they disturb their own souls, they disturb

* Quoniam mores et vitia regis imitari genus obsequii est; abjecerunt pietatem ne exprobrare regi (Jovi) scelus viderentur.—Lactantius.

their own families, they disturb the place and kingdom where they live. If a meek person shall be hid in the day of God's anger, oh, where will you appear that are of a froward temper? I say, where will you appear in the evil day? Bear the word of exhortation. It is only to get a sweet and loving disposition. Oh, that our love might flourish at last and abound towards one another and to all the saints.

Hereby, even your meekness, ye walk as becometh the gospel, ye inherit the earth, are made like unto Jesus Christ, have a great power and credit in heaven for yourselves and others, and shall be hidden in the evil day.

And therefore, if any are here that are of a froward and perverse disposition, go to God and say, Lord, give me meekness; and wherein I have been froward, either in my family or elsewhere, forgive me this frowardness, and let not the kingdom fare the worse by it.

It may be you will say, Oh, but he, or he, or he hath much provoked me, and I cannot bear it.

But suppose that you have a ball of gold in your hand, and another throw dirt in your face, will you throw away that golden ball at him, because of the dirt that he doth throw on you? This meekness, sweet disposition, is your ball of gold; and what though he throw dirt in your face? you must wash the dirt off his feet. Christ did so, washed his disciples' feet. And for our example, Luther calls upon magistrates, ministers, and all people, to tuck up their sleeves, and to fall a washing of the disciples' feet, by a loving and sweet submitting of our excellencies unto their infirmities.

But, Lord, how contrary are we unto Christ? He washed his disciples' feet; we throw dirt in disciples' faces. Oh that this guilt may not cleave to our souls in our dying day! If this day we could but stand up and forgive one another, and learn meekness and sweetness towards one another, it would prevail more with God than all our fasting and prayer; and without it, all our fasting and prayer is of no avail.

But my exhortation is unto you, especially, that are the meek of the earth. Ye hear what interest, power and credit ye have in heaven: seeing ye have so great an interest, away, away to your Father's knee, and for poor England's sake improve your interest, and for Ireland's, Scotland's sake hold not your peace: your dear and tender Father will bid your

prayers welcome. Take a prospect of our sad condition: do ye not hear how Ireland cries, Help, help, O living England, help poor, dying Ireland! Do ye not hear how our afflicted, plundered and spoiled brethren in other parts of this kingdom cry, Have pity, have pity upon us, oh, all our friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched us! How the poor, ignorant cry out of the countries, Oh, help to deliver us from the wrath to come! How this whole staggering nation cries, If ever you help, help now; if you have an interest in heaven, use it now!

Now, therefore, according to all your engagements here and your interest in heaven, go pray, cry, and cease not; you may do much, you shall do much: for if any man in the earth can do any good, it is the "meek of the earth." Wherefore, oh, all you that are the meek of the earth, I beseech you improve your interest, seek ye the Lord: and not only this day, but all your days, seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be you, and others by you, shall be hidden "in the day of the Lord's anger."