

REMAINS,
BEING
EIGHT SERMONS,

- 1.—ON MAN'S BLESSEDNESS.
- 2.—AFFECTIONS RIGHTLY PLACED.
- 3.—HOW TO WALK WITH GOD IN OUR CALLING.
- 4.—OF GOOD AND BAD COMPANY.
- 5.—THE CARNALITY OF PROFESSORS.
- 6.—WHAT OUR WORK IS, AND HOW TO BE DONE.
- 7.—SOUL RESIGNATION INTO THE HANDS OF GOD.
- 8.—THE DIGNITY AND DUTY OF GOD'S CALLED ONES.

A. D. 1673.

[This series of Sermons which was published in 1673, under the title of Bridge's Remains, was designed by the Author for the press, as appears by the marginal notes, except the eighth Sermon, which was the last the author preached, and which was taken down in short-hand, and published by his son-in-law, after they were perused by the Rev. William Greenhill.]

REMAINS.

SERMON I.

ON MAN'S BLESSEDNESS; OR, THE BLESSED MAN.

"Many there be that say, Who will shew us any good! Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us."—PSALM IV. 6.

IN this psalm we are taught, by David's example, how to carry and behave ourselves in times of danger. By David two things are done, which are the parts of the psalm.

First, He prays, ver. 1.

Secondly, He believes; which appears by,

His exhortation to his enemies, ver. 2—6.

The profession of his faith, see ver. 7 to the end. Which profession of his faith is illustrated by an argument drawn *a dissimili*, ver. 7, "Many say," &c. but, "Lord," &c.

By his own security in this time of trouble, verse 8.

"Many there be that say:" that is, not with the mouth only, but by the language of their lives and practices, for even those that are dumb do say, "Who will shew us any good?" who will shew us, or will make us to see or enjoy any good? The words note an ardency of their desire, "Who will shew us any good?" But I say, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance (or face) upon me;" that is, shew thy love and thy favour to me. The elevation of God's face or countenance, in scripture phrase, doth note the communication and manifestation of the gracious presence and favour of God. For it is a metaphor drawn from the rising sun, scattering the beams of its light so upon inferior creatures, that thereby life and comfort is brought unto them. This David prays for, and chooses in opposition to the generality of men's desires. And so the doctrine is this:

Though men do ordinarily seek after something that may make them happy in this world, yet a gracious man doth

count himself fully happy in the enjoyment of God, and the light of his countenance.

It is true, indeed, there is an happiness to be obtained, saith he, and ordinary men do seek this happiness in the crowd and throng of the creatures; but as for me, I do not place my happiness there, but in the clear enjoyment of God. Whatever, therefore, men say or do in reference to their happiness, this is that I say, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me." So that, though men do ordinarily seek after something that may make them happy in the world; yet a good and gracious man doth account himself fully happy in the enjoyment of God and the light of his countenance. For the opening and prosecuting whereof:

First, I shall labour to shew you that there is a disposition in men, to seek after something that may make them happy.

Secondly, That they are commonly mistaken in the matter of their happiness.

Thirdly, Yet there is a generation of men, who have found out true happiness, and are truly blessed.

Fourthly, Wherein this happiness doth consist, and why it doth consist therein?

Fifthly, How a man shall know, whether he hath ever been thus blessed, or enhappied with the light of God's countenance shining on him?

Sixthly, How he may attain hereunto?

As for the first, That there is a disposition in men to seek after something that may make them happy. This text saith, "Many say, Who will shew us any good?" By which *many*, we are, saith Dr. Ames, to understand all men.* But that cannot be, because here is an opposition in David's practice, to the practice of this many: but his practice was not opposed unto all, but to the generality of men generally; therefore there is a disposition in men, to seek after something that may make them happy. In the beginning man was truly happy, and though he be now fallen from that happiness, yet there is a disposition in him still to grope after

* *Nemo est mortalium qui habet in votis ut fruatur bono: hoc est, naturale est omnium creaturarum commune tendere in aliquem finem, sub aliqua ratione boni, finis enim et bonum convertuntur, homini autem maxime convenit, qui præditus est intellectu, quo finem apprehendit ibi proponit et ad illum per media contendit.*—Ames in Psalm.

Agere propter finem est proprium creaturæ rationalis.—Aquinas.

happiness. Ye see how it is with a house that is burnt down, though it be burnt down to the ground, there are divers pieces of timber left; though scorched and burned and spoiled, yet left: and so, though man be fallen, and that goodly building which God created at the first be now burned down to the ground, yet there are certain scorched and spoiled principles left in him; and what more natural to man than to desire that he may be happy: surely, therefore, there is a disposition still in man to seek after happiness. Look how far a man knows that a thing is good, so far he may act and seek after it, because good is the object of man's will; but every man knows in general that it is good for him to be happy.

It is true, indeed, that naturally men do not distinctly know wherein their happiness lies; but as Aquinas observes,* there is a general knowledge of happiness, and there is a distinct and right understanding of it. Now though all men have not this distinct knowledge of our happiness, yet all men have a general knowledge of it, and they know that it is good for them to be happy; surely, therefore, there is a disposition in all the children of men to seek after something that may make them happy. But,

Secondly, Though there be such a disposition in men, yet they are generally mistaken in the matter of their happiness. Many say, Who will shew us any good? but, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance, &c. It seems, then, that there is a general mistake amongst men in reference to this happiness. Is not he mistaken herein that doth bless himself in the way of his sin? some do so, Deut. xxix. 19. Is not he mistaken herein that doth bless the covetous, whom God hates? some do so, Psalm x. Is not he mistaken that doth place his happiness in the enjoyment of the creature? and who doth not so? Oh, says one, if I can but attain to such and such an estate, then I shall be happy. Oh, says another, I am now reviled and reproached; if I can but clear myself,

† *Utrum omnis homo appetat beatitudinem? Item quod beatitudo dupliciter potest considerari, et primo secundum communem rationem beatitudinis, et sit necesse est, quod omnis homo beatitudinem velit, ratio autem beatitudinis communis est, ut sit bonum perfectum, &c. Secundo possumus loquide beatitudine secundum specialem rationem quantum, ad id in quo beatitudo consistit, et sic non omnes cognoscant beatitudinem qui nesciunt cui rei communis ratio beatitudinis conveniat, ut per consequens, quantum ad hoc non omnes eam volunt.—Aquinas 12 æ. q. 5, a. 8.*

and come off with honour, then I shall be happy. Oh, says another, I have such and such an adversary, if I can but overcome him, then I shall be happy. What man is there that doth not place his happiness in one creature comfort or another? Do not some place their happiness in pleasure, some in riches, some in honour, some in power, some in health, strength, and beauty of body; some in knowledge, wit and learning; some in moral, civil life, and other excellencies? But if happiness cannot be found in these, either singly or together, then surely there is a great mistake amongst the children of men in reference to there last end and happiness. Now what creature excellency is there in all the world that can give this happiness to the children of men? Certainly none.*

For will ye instance in the strength and health and beauty of one's body. Indeed our health is the salt of all the mercies and comforts which we do enjoy; but may not a bad and wicked man enjoy his health and strength and beauty as well as a good man, and can any wicked man be happy: happiness consists in a stable good, but what more unstable and uncertain than our health and strength and beauty. Surely, therefore, our happiness is not to be found therein. Or,

Will ye instance in riches, wealth, and this world's goods. It is the property of happiness to be desireable for itself; it is that good thing which all things are desired for, and which is desired for nothing else: but riches are desired for something else, not for themselves; and if it be a man's duty sometimes to part with them and to despise them, then our happiness cannot consist in them, but we are sometimes to part with all these things for Christ. Surely, therefore, our happiness is not to be found therein.

Will ye instance in honour, fame and credit in this world. What more uncertain than that which is not one's own? Is it not a better thing to deserve honour than to be honourable? But that is truly blessed which is best of all. And if it be more safe for a man to be reproached sometimes, than to be applauded, then our happiness cannot consist in honour; but as Seneca says, *Beatus est qui contemnere potest et contemni*: He is a happy man that can contemn and be contemned. If I be reproached, then I learn to walk humbly; if I be ap-

* Vide Aquin. Sum. i. 2 æ. contra gent. l. 3. Suar. de Beat. Anton. panth. ps. 1.

plauded, then I grow proud thereby. And ye know what was the issue of Haman's honour. Surely, therefore, our happiness cannot consist therein. Or,

Will ye instance in power and outward greatness in this world. What doth more depend on others? That which depends on many other men's wills cannot be my happiness; so doth all worldly power and greatness do: there is nothing better than our happiness. Now worldly power may be used to evil; and that is better which cannot be used or abused to evil: but so worldly power may be; surely, therefore, our happiness cannot consist therein. Or,

Will ye instance in pleasure, which is the great Diana of the world, that is common to brute beasts; and can that make a man truly happy which the beasts have. If pleasure make a man happy, then the more pleasure he takes the more happy he is; but the more pleasure that a man takes, the more wicked he is. It is the property of true happiness to elevate the mind, to ennoble the soul, and to justify the heart; but the more carnal pleasure a man takes, the more his mind is depressed, his soul effeminated, and the less his heart is satisfied. Surely, therefore, our happiness cannot consist therein. Or,

Will ye instance in knowledge, wit and wisdom. Solomon tells you, that "in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," Eccles. i. Surely, therefore, our happiness cannot consist therein. Or,

Will ye instance in moral virtues, and in a civil life; the more happy that any man is, the more he doth draw nigh and is made like to God; but a man is not made like to God by moral virtues or a civil life: surely, therefore, our happiness cannot consist therein.

But though our happiness doth not consist in any of these alone, yet it may be that all these together can make one happy.

Nay, for put all these things together, yea, put all the good things and comforts of this world together, yet they are not sufficient for to make one happy;* for take the good things

* Omnes creaturæ sine Deo, non possunt esse sufficiens objectum humanæ beatitudinis.—Suar. de Beat. Disp. § 1.

Solus Deus, sine consortio alicujus creaturæ, est sufficiens objectum beatitudinis.—Ib. § 2.

of this world, and abstract them from the enjoyment of God, and though they be never so many, yet they are dependent things which do depend on another, and can that make you truly happy which doth depend on another? Take all the blessings and comforts of the world together, and they cannot make a man godly that is ungodly; now can that make you happy which cannot make you good? What is there in the world, take it singly, or in society with others, which is free from imperfection; and can that make you perfect which is in itself imperfect? The more that any superior thing is mingled with its inferior, the more it is defiled. Is not gold defiled by being mixed with silver; is not silver defiled by being mixed with brass; is not wine defiled by being mixed with water; is not wheat defiled by being mixed with chaff? Now take all the creatures in the world together, and they are inferior to your souls. Surely, therefore, you may be defiled, but you cannot be made happy or blessed thereby. Yet, Lord, how many are there that say, concerning these outward things, Who will shew us any good? Why? Because they are mistaken in the matter of their happiness.

But how comes it to pass that men are thus mistaken in the matter of their happiness?

Sometimes this mistake doth arise from ignorance of the right and true notion of happiness. If a countryman that hath heard of a king, go up to the court, and see a knight, or lord, or prince come out in fine and brave apparel, he saith, Lo, there is the king; because he knows him not by face; a general notion he hath of a king, but not having the true notion of his person, he is mistaken, and saith, Lo, there is my king and sovereign. So a man having heard that there is something that will make one happy, but not having the right and true notion of it, he is thereby mistaken in the choice of his happiness; as for example: it is truly said, that he that is happy hath what he would; now men turn this principle, and say, He that hath what he would have is a happy man: and so if a wanton hath the embraces of his beloved, then he says, Now am I happy, because I have what I would; so if a drunkard meet with his vain and wicked companion, he saith, Now am I happy, because I have what I would: whereas in truth, as Austin's mother said, He is not happy that hath what he would, but he that wills aright, and then hath what

he would.* But because men are ignorant thereof, and have not the true notion of happiness in their hearts, therefore they are so mistaken.

Sometimes this mistake doth arise from the misapplication of the true notion of happiness. For what is happiness but the enjoyment of that which doth command all things else? But now, through misapplication of this notion, men say, Money commands all things; and therefore the more money I get, the more happy I am: and so are mistaken in the matter of their happiness.

Sometimes men are mistaken herein, because they measure their happiness by their own present want. For, saith Aristotle,† if you look into your experience, ye shall find, that if a man be poor, then he thinks it an happiness to be rich; if a man be disgraced, then he thinks it is his happiness to be vindicated; if a man be sick, then he thinks there is no greater happiness in the world than to have his health; and so men measuring their happiness by their own present wants are mistaken therein.

But ordinarily men are mistaken in the matter of their happiness, because they do not hearken to and consider what is spoken to them about true happiness. Famous is that story of Cræsus among the heathens; he was a king of a great country, and boasted in his gold and silver, and Solon, that wise man of Greece, coming into his country, he desired to speak with him, and when he saw him, after Solon had seen and viewed all his wealth and glory, he asked him, Whom he thought to be the most happy man in the world; imagining that Solon would have said Cræsus. But Solon answered, I think Tellus was the most happy man; Tellus, saith he, why Tellus? Because, said Solon, he having governed the commonwealth well, and brought up his child honestly and religiously, he died honourably.‡ Well then, said Cræsus, but who dost thou think is the second happy man in the world? I think, said he, those two brothers,

* Si bona velit et habet beatus est, si autem mala velit et quamvis habeat miser est.—Augustini Confess.

† Aristotle Ethic. i. 1.

‡ Τελλω τουτω μεν παιδες ησαν καλοι και αγαθοι πολλοι μεν γαρ πλουτοι ανδρωπων ανολβιοι εισι, πολλοι δε μεθριως εχοντες βιου ευτυχεις. Vide Heroditus, lib. i.

that instead of horses, drew their mother in a chariot to the temple. Whereupon, said Crœsus, What thinkest thou of me? I think, said he, thou art a very rich man; but a man may be happy though he be poor, and a man may be unhappy though he be rich, for he may lose all his riches before he die; and therefore, *ante obitum nemo*, I think none truly happy, but he that lives well, and dies well; whereupon that wise man Solon was dismissed the court with neglect: but afterwards this Crœsus making war against Cyrus, he was overcome by Cyrus, and being taken captive, he was laid upon a pile of wood to be burned to death; then lying on the pile of wood, he cried out and said, O Solon, Solon. Cyrus inquiring what he meant, then he said, This Solon was a wise man of Greece, that told me, that happiness did not consist in riches, for they might all be lost, and a rich man might die miserable; whose words, said he, I then neglected, but now I find true, and therefore now I cry out and say, O Solon, Solon. And truly thus it is at this day, preachers call upon men, and tell them, that our happiness lies not in these outward things, and they do not regard it. But there is a time coming when men will cry out and say, O Solon, Solon; but for the present, men will not hear and consider where their happiness lies, and therefore they are thus mistaken in the matter of heir thappiness. But thus now you have heard, that men are mistaken, and how it comes to pass that they are so mistaken; and so I have done with the second general, now the third follows.

Thirdly, Though men are generally mistaken in the matter of their happiness, yet there is a generation of men who have found out this happiness, and are truly blessed. Many say, Who will shew us any good, but I say otherwise; plainly then, there is a generation of men that have found out this happiness, and are truly blest; for those that the Scripture calls blessed, are blessed indeed. Now there is a generation of men whom the Scripture calls blessed, and if you would know who these are, I will instance to you in some particulars.

The Scripture calls them blessed, that have their sins pardoned, "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered," Róm. iv.

The Scripture calls them blessed whom the Lord doth teach the mysteries of his kingdom, "Blessed is the man

whom thou teachest out of thy law," Ps. xciv. 12. "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father," Matt. xvi. 17.

The Scripture calls them blessed that wait at the posts of wisdom, and are made wise thereby, "Blessed is the man that heareth me, and waiteth daily at my gates, watching at the posts of my door," Prov. viii. 35. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and getteth understanding," Prov. iii. 13. so again, verse 18, "and happy is every one that retaineth her."

The Scripture calls them blessed that are of a meek, humble, and a pure spirit. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." "Blessed are the pure in heart." "Blessed are the meek in spirit," Matt. v.

The Scripture calls them blessed that do walk in God's ways, and not in the ways of the world. Ps. i. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth meditate day and night." So Ps. cxix. 1, "Blessed is the man that is undefiled in the way," and so again, Ps. cxii. 1, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments."

The Scripture calls them blessed that suffer for Christ, his way, and truth, and name. Matt v., "Blessed are ye when men persecute and revile you for my name's sake."

The Scripture calls them blessed that consider the poor saints and people of God, who have bowels of love and compassions. Ps. xli. "Blessed is the man that considereth the poor."

The Scripture calls them blessed that know and do the work of their place and office, both to God and man. John xiii. 17, "I say unto you, saith Christ, the servant is not greater than the lord, if ye know these things, happy are ye if you do them."

The Scripture calls them blessed that wait and prepare for the deliverance of the churches, and the coming of Christ: "behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments," Rev. xvi.

The Scripture calls them blessed that die in the Lord, and are found so doing when Christ comes; blessed is that ser-

vant whom, when the Lord comes he shall find so doing," Matt. xxiv. "And blessed are those that die in the Lord," Rev. xiv. 13. Do you therefore ask who is this blessed man, the man that is truly blessed? the Scripture tells you in all these particulars, so that doubtless there is a generation of men that have found this happiness, and are truly blessed; that is the third general, now the fourth follows.

Fourthly, Wherein the true blessedness or happiness doth consist; the text tells you, "in the light of God's countenance and the shine of his face;"* for look wherein God did command the priests of old for to bless his people, therein true blessedness must needs consist; now if ye look into Numbers vi. 23, ye shall find that therein God commanded Aaron and his sons for to bless the people; "On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying, The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee, the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee;" and if you look into Ps. lxxvii. 1, ye shall find that when the psalmist prayed for a blessing, he prayed thus, "The Lord be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us." Surely therefore the happiness and blessedness of man must needs lie and consist in the light of God's countenance, and the shine of his face.

But if our blessedness doth consist herein, then some of God's own people are not blessed; for God doth hide his face from some of them, and how many are there, even amongst the saints, that complain, saying, Oh, the face of God doth not shine upon me?

I answer, True they do so, and it is possible that God may hide his face from his own children for a time; but what child of God is there in all the world, but the face of God hath shined upon. It is possible that a child of a natural father, may never see the face of his father; his father may be dead before he is born; but no child of God but hath seen his Father's face: for what is the face of God but his favour; and what is the shine thereof but the manifestation of his favour; and when God pardoned his sin at the first, did not he manifest his love and favour to him? And doth he not

* *Beatitudo formalis consistit in fruitione beatitudinis objectivæ, beatitudo autem objectiva est Deus: quia est bonum perfectum satiens appetitum.*

daily do it in supporting him with his arm? In the times of the Old Testament, the saints did measure the favour of God too much by outward mercies and blessings; because the land of Canaan was promised them as a favour from God, when the enemy did break in upon them, they said, That God did then hide his face from them; but ye know how it is with the day; if it be day, the sun shines, and though ye see not the beams thereof, yet you see the light thereof; so here, though you see not the beams of God's countenance, yet if it be day with you, you see the light thereof. Now it is day with all the children of God, they are children of the day; and therefore whatever they say or think, there is none of God's children, but the face of God doth or hath shined upon.

Fifthly, But how shall I know that the face of God hath ever shined on my soul, for there are many delusions about this matter; how shall I therefore know that God hath ever lifted up the light of his countenance upon my soul?

That is the fifth general, therefore I shall now speak to that. If God hath ever blessed you in truth, then hath his face shined upon you; for his blessing and the shine of his face go together, as ye have heard. Now when God blesses a man, then he draws him nearer to himself, "Blessed is the man (saith the Psalmist) whom thou causest to approach unto thee;" when God blesses a man, then he makes him to increase and multiply; if he bless him in his estate, then he doth increase and multiply therein: if he bless him in his parts, or gifts, or graces, or comforts, then he causeth him to increase therein; so at the beginning the Lord blessed man and said, "Increase and multiply." And therefore if thou hast been such an one as hath lived at a distance from God, and now art brought nigh to him, and increased in thy gifts, graces, and comforts, then hath the Lord blessed thy soul, and so hath shined on thee.

If God hath ever shined upon thy soul, then he hath wonderfully irradiated, and enlightened, and taught thy soul the mysteries of the gospel, which did never enter in thy heart before. Ps. lxxvii. 1, 2, the Psalmist saith, "Be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause thy face to shine upon us, that thy way may be known," &c. And says the apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 4—6, "God that commanded light to shine out of

darkness, shine into your hearts, to give you the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

If this light of God's countenance hath indeed shined upon your heart, then your other carnal, kitchen lights have been put out thereby. Ye see that when the sun shines upon the kitchen fire it doth put it out; so if ever God hath shined upon your soul, there hath such a glory fallen upon your hearts, that thereby all your carnal, kitchen comforts and delights have been put out thereby.

If God hath shined upon thy soul in truth, then are you satisfied with the light of God's countenance, and yet your desire after it is the more increased. This seems to be a paradox, but it is true; the more a man sees the light of God's countenance, the more he longs after it; and the more he longs after it, the more he is satisfied with it. "Shew us the Father (saith Thomas) and it sufficeth;" I have now that, saith the soul, which doth make me happy; therefore I am fully satisfied, yet I have tasted such sweetness in it, as I cannot but thirst and long after more. Oh, when shall I come and appear before thee, that I may be fully satisfied with thy likeness.

If the face of God hath ever shined upon your soul, then there hath been a time when you were in the dark, and by the light of God's countenance, your doubts and fears have been all dispelled at once. God never shines but upon those that have been in the dark; "God that commanded light to shine out of darkness, shine into your hearts," saith the apostle, and when God shines, then all your fears, and doubts, and objections are answered at once; not by degrees, and one after another, but the face of God answers all at once. As when the husband comes home, though his wife have had many fears that she should never see him again; yet when she sees his face, then all her fears and doubts are answered at once; so here, although you have had many fears that you should never see the face of God again, yet when his face shines, then all your doubts are answered at once.

If the face of God have ever shined upon your soul in truth, then have you been thereby enabled to do and act some great thing for God, and you have had a heart given you to do it. Cant. i. 12, "When the king sits at his table, my

spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." By spikenard here, we are to understand the sweet smelling fruits and graces of the spouse of Christ. Now saith she, these graces send forth their smell when Christ sits at his table: when I have the gracious presence of Christ, then are my graces most odoriferous, then can I act and do that for Christ which I never could before, then my graces do send forth their smell, then can I do some great and special thing for Christ. And,

If the face of God did never shine upon your soul, then you could and would not be so afflicted for the want thereof. *Ignoti nulla cupido*, if you had not tasted of this sweetness, you could not be so afflicted for the want thereof; but when you think that God hides his face from you, then you are as one that goes down to the pit, and you say, Oh, all the world for one smile from Christ. Lord, let me see thy face though I be a beggar, and though I have no comforts in this world, yet let my see thy face, for I am not able to live without the light of thy countenance.

And if ever you have seen the face of God in truth, then hath your heart been inflamed with love to Christ upon that account: for by him you had your address into the presence of God, by him and in him God's face doth shine upon your soul. God that commanded light to shine out of darkness, shine into our hearts, to give us the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Though you cannot behold and look upon the sun in his full glory; yet if you look upon the water where the sun shines, you may see the sun. Now God shineth upon Christ, and in him you do see God's face; and therefore if ever God did in truth shine upon your soul, then hath your heart been inflamed with love to Christ upon this account; but if your heart were never inflamed with love to Christ upon this score, if you were never afflicted for the want of God's face and presence, if you never were enabled to do any great thing for Christ, if you never were in the dark in reference to your spiritual condition, if your desires after God were never satisfied and increased at once, if your kitchen fire was never put out by divine irradiation upon your soul, if you have never been so blessed by the Lord as thereby to be drawn out of the world to himself and to be increased in spiritual things, then hath not God shined

on you to this day, and therefore you are yet to seek for your true happiness.

Sixthly, But suppose the face of God never yet shined on my soul, or that it hath shined, and is now hidden, what shall I do that the face of God may shine upon me, that so I may be made partaker of this true happiness and blessedness?

That is the sixth general which I will only speak unto and conclude. Would you have this light of God's countenance, and the face of God shining on you? then,

Be sure that you take heed of all the sins which do or have hid the face of God from you, Isaiah lix. 1, the prophet saith unto the people of God, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you;" is God's face therefore hidden from you, look into your life and way, and consider what those sins are, and take heed thereof.

The way to have any mercy from God is to be upright in the desiring of it; "He will be a sun and shield to them that fear him, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Is therefore the face of God shining, the good thing that you desire? Take heed that you do not desire it, merely for the sweetness of it.* It is a sweet thing to behold the sun, much more the shine of God's face, but if I desire it only for the sweetness of it, then I am not upright therein; take heed therefore of that.

If you would have the face of God shining on you, then be sure that you stand where God shines and blesses. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, hath God shined; and there (saith the psalmist,) he commandeth his blessing, and life for evermore," Ps. l. 2. What is his blessing, but the shine of his face; and how doth he command it? By giving it: there "he commandeth his blessing." There then do you stand, where the Lord blesseth and shineth.

In case that God seemeth to hide his face from you at any time, then walk wisely and humbly towards God in the time of his supposed absence; then lament after God and his presence, as the greatest loss in the world; then take heed of jealousies, and do not say, God is gone and will return no more; then be much in obedience, and say, Well, though I

* Multi sunt gulosi spirituales. - Avila.

cannot see God, yet I will serve him, and though I cannot enjoy him, yet I will obey him : and if you carry it wisely and humbly towards God in the time of his absence, then will he return again unto you, and will cause his face to shine upon you. But,

Take heed that you do not dig too deep into the earth : he that is much under ground, cannot see the sun or the shinings of it. So if you be much in the world and under ground, you cannot see the face of God, and the light of his countenance. Therefore take heed that you be not much under ground in your callings. And,

Whatever frowns you meet withal from men, be quiet under them and improve them ; for usually God shines when man frowns. Do men therefore frown upon you, take their frowns quietly, and wait for a shining God now. And,

Be sure that you do not frown nor look awry upon any that are Christ's ; for how should God look kindly on you, when you look unkindly on his ? How should his face shine on you, when your face doth not shine on his ? Therefore take heed that you frown not on any that are God's.

Then throw yourself down at God's feet in a quiet resignation of yourself unto God, for God will surely take them into his arms that do throw themselves down at his feet. If I can leave myself at Christ's feet, he will take me into his bosom, and I shall see his face : wherefore then throw yourself down at God's feet. And,

Pray, and pray much for the presence of God, and the shine of his face upon your soul. " Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth," saith the spouse. Ye have a command for this, " Seek the Lord and his strength ; seek ye his face evermore," Ps. cv. 4. And the Lord hath promised to give you this mercy ; for look what God promised to his people of old, that he promised to you and to all his people. Now he saith, " Neither will I hide my face any more from them," Ezek. xxxix. 29 : though I have hid my face from them for a time, yet I will not hide my face any more from them. Would you, therefore, have the face of God to shine upon you ? go and pray, and pray earnestly for the face and presence of God, and say with David here, " Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon me ;" and thus shall you be made partakers of this great blessing. And thus I have

done with this argument, The blessedness of man, or the true blessed man.

SERMON II.

AFFECTIONS RIGHTLY PLACED.

“*Set your affections on things above.*”—COL. III. 2.

IN this verse the apostle Paul doth exhort the Colossians, and us by them, to seek and favour spiritual things. The exhortation is expressed and answered: expressed in the first verse, “Seek those things which are above,” and in the second, “Set your affections on things above.” It is enforced by divers arguments. One is drawn from our communion with Christ in his resurrection and ascension: “If ye then (as I have told you in the former chapter) be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, for Christ sitteth on the right-hand of God.” Another argument is drawn from our communion with Christ in his death: “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with God in Christ; therefore set your affections on things above, and not on the earth.” Another argument is drawn from the danger of inordinate affection, for which things’ sake “the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience,” ver. 6. “Therefore mortify your members which are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection,” ver. 5. Another argument is drawn from our present relation, state and condition: “In the which ye also walked sometimes when ye lived in them; but you also put off all these,” &c. ver. 7, 8. So that the words of the text are part of the exhortation itself, “Set your affections on things above, *τα ανω φρονηετε*. By things that are above, we must not only understand heaven, the joys and the glories of it, but all spiritual and heavenly things also, which are to be enjoyed and obtained here, which are from above, because “every good and perfect gift is from above, from the Father of lights;” and whatever grace or spiritual enjoyment we have on this side heaven, is the seed of that heavenly glory. Now these heavenly things we are to mind especially, *φρονηετε*, mind ye: but because the apostle had

called upon us to seek these things, in the former verse, and there is somewhat more in this than in the former, and the word doth not barely signify to mind a thing, but to mind it with favour;* therefore we translate it thus, "Set your affections on things above." According, therefore, to our translation of the words, the doctrine is, 'That it is the duty of all the saints, to set their affections on things above; they are in a special manner for to mind the same, and to favour them, and they are to have their conversation in heaven; their treasure is there, and therefore there is their heart to be; and where our heart is, there our affections will be, for affections are the issues of the heart: as a man's heart is, so he affects, and as he affects, so his heart is. I know it is usual with philosophers and divines, to place their affections in *parte sensitiva*; but if we look into them, we shall find that affections in the general are these movings of the rational soul, whereby the heart is sensibly carried out upon good or evil, so as to embrace the one or refuse the other. I say they are,

The movings or motions of the reasonable soul. Ye shall observe, therefore, that when Jerusalem was much affected with the tidings of Christ's birth, it is said, "All Jerusalem was moved." And when the Jews were affected with envy against Paul and the brethren, it is said, "they were moved with envy:" why? but because affection is the motion or moving of the soul of man.

As it is the moving of the soul, so it is that motion of the soul whereby the heart is sensibly carried out upon what is good or evil; for every act or moving of the soul is not an affection. The soul moves towards a thing, when it inquires into it, or doth will the same; but every act of the understanding and will is not an affection. But when the soul of man doth sensibly move, or is sensibly carried out unto good or evil, then it is said to be affected; and therefore saith the church in the Lamentations, "Mine eye affecteth mine heart."

As the soul must be sensibly carried out unto what is good or evil, so it must embrace or refuse the same; for af-

* Vocabulum *φρονεῖν* duos actus complectitur, actum mentis sive intellectus de re aliqua cogitantis: atque actum voluntatis, sive affectus rem aliquam approbantis et amantis.—Davenant. in Col. xxxi.

fections are of two sorts, concupiscible and irascible: by one we follow what is good, and by the other we do shun what is evil; the Lord hath placed several affections in the soul: but all are the servants and ministers of love. I love a thing, and therefore if it be absent I desire it, if it be present I rejoice and delight in it. If any thing do oppose the thing that I love, then I am angry with it, or do hate the same. So that love is the great wheel, and as that moves, all love, some in a way of embracing, some in a way of refusing. And so you now see what these affections are which we are to set upon things above; they are these motions of the soul whereby a man is sensibly carried out unto good or evil, so as to embrace or refuse the same.

But how and in what respect are we to “set our affections on things above, and not on things here below?” What, may we not at all affect the things of this life?

Yes, ye may desire the things of this life, and desire is an affection; and ye may grieve at the loss of them, and grief is an affection. But,

Though in a good sense ye may affect them, yet ye may not affect them for themselves; in deference to Christ, in subordination to God, ye may affect them: but for themselves ye may not affect them: for where do you find in all the Scripture that you are commanded to love the world, and the things of the world. “Husbands love your wives, wives your husbands, parents love your children, and children your parents.” One man may, and must love another. But where are you commanded to love yourself? Implicitly, indeed this is commanded, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” But where have ye an express commandment for to love yourself, or where do ye find in all the word that you are advised to love your money, your gold, silver, house, or land, and estate? Nowhere; surely therefore you may not affect these things for themselves.*

Though ye may affect the things that are here below; yet in comparison with spiritual and heavenly things, your affections to these things is to be as no affection, but a *tanquam* only; as the enjoyments of this world is but a *tanquam* unto heavenly enjoyments, and outward afflictions is but a *tan-*

* Non dixit nolite habere sed nolite diligere.—Augustin.

quam to afflictions of the soul. So the affection that is laid out upon these things, in comparison is to be but a *tanquam*. "Let him that rejoiceth, be as though he rejoiced not, and him that grieveth, as though he grieved not," saith the apostle; you may afford these outward things some relics of your love, and so much only as better things leave, for what is too cool for God, is hot enough for them. *Toleramus potius presentia, quam diligamus*, says Austin. "My son (saith God), give me thine heart." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy heart, with all thy might, and with all thy strength." Surely, therefore, our affection to these outward things is in comparison to be as no affection. But our affections are to be set and placed on things that are above, not on things that are below, but on things above.

But why are we thus to set and place our affections on things that are above?

There are many great and important reasons, all which are as so many proofs of the doctrine.

If you do not set your affections on Christ, and the things of Christ, you are no fit match for him; you will not be found marriageable unto the Lord Christ. That woman is not fit to be married to a man, whose affections are not drawn out and knit to him: and if your affections be not drawn out to Christ, and the things of Christ, you are no fit match for Christ. Now we must all be espoused to Christ, and married to him; as the church, so every believer is the true spouse of Christ; but the spouse of Christ ye cannot be, unless your affections be drawn out to him.

As you cannot be married to Christ unless your affections be set on him and the things above, so you will never own him unless your affections be set on him. It is the duty of all the saints to own Christ, his ways, his truths, his ordinances: "He that is ashamed of me before men, him will I be ashamed of before my Father which is in heaven," saith Christ. Now look what that is which a man doth much affect, that he will own and not be ashamed of; but if a man doth not affect a thing, he will not own it, but will be ashamed of it; but we must own Christ here, or he will not own us hereafter. Surely, therefore, it is very fit and necessary that our affections be set on Christ and the things above.

If your affections be not set upon things above, they will never be drawn off from things here beneath; it is the gracious affection that doth mortify carnal affection. Sin is ever truly mortified by the contrary good: the joy of the world, by the joy of heaven; worldly grief, by spiritual grief: the snow is not melted but by the warm beams of the sun, and the more your hearts are warmed and drawn out with love to Christ, the more your love and affections to the world will be mortified. Now is it not necessary that our affections should be drawn off from things here below? Surely, therefore, it is fit and necessary for us to set and place our affections upon Christ and the things above.

If your affections be not set upon things above, spiritual and heavenly things, you will never press much after the knowledge and obtainment of them. Ye see how it is with a child, if he have no affections to his book, he will never make a scholar; and so if you have no affections to the things of Christ, you will never make a scholar in the school of Christ. Great is the power of affections. As it is said of conscience, *Magna est vis conscientiae in utramque partem*; Great is the force of conscience either way, for truth or error; so I may say of affections, *Magna est vis affectionum in utramque partem*; Great is the force of affections either way, to put us on to evil or good. Look what a man hath an affection to, that he presseth after. Now is it not our duty to press after the knowledge of Christ. Surely, therefore, it is very fit and requisite that we should place our affections on things above.

If your affections be not thus set, you will never be zealous for God, for what is zeal but angered love; it is, saith one, *divinae charitatis fervor*; the heat of divine love. Surely it is the top and extremity of affection. Now is it not our duty to be zealous for Christ? "The zeal of thine house (saith he) hath eaten me up;" and shall the zeal of our own houses eat us up? Zeal is commanded in opposition to lukewarmness: "Be zealous, therefore, and repent," saith Christ to lukewarm Laodicea: but zealous we cannot be for God and the things of God, unless our affections be set on things that are above.

If our affections be not thus set on things above, you will never do any great thing for God. We read of David that he gave three hundred and forty seven millions, three hundred

and eighty two thousand, five hundred pounds, in silver and gold of his own charges, to the building of God's house; for so the learned do compute the matter; a mighty, great and a vast sum. But if you look into 1 Chron. xxix., ye shall see how this came to pass that he gave such a gift: it is said, verse 3, "I have set mine affections to the house of God; and because I have set mine affections to the house of God, I have of mine own proper goods given," &c. And what is the reason that men give and do no more now for God, but because their affections are not set on the things of God: but if God have done great things for us, and Christ have suffered great things for us, shall not we do some great things for him; this ye cannot do unless your affections be thus set. Surely, therefore, it is our duty to set our affections on things that are above.

If your affections be not thus set, you can never please God in any thing that you do for God;* for as he requireth truth in the inward parts, so he requireth that we should serve him with fervency of spirit: "Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," Rom. xii. 11; as if no service could be acceptable without the fervency of affection. "Cursed is every one that hath in his flock a male (saith Malachi) and offereth a female to God. Go and offer it to thy prince," saith God. Do you think that I will accept your female affections? no, saith the Lord, if you would have acceptance with me, I must have the best and the masculine affections from you. Surely, therefore, it is very fit and necessary that our affections be set and placed on things that are above.

If your affections be not set on things that are above, how shall your heart be knit, engaged and united unto God, in opposition to all apostacy. If you look into Scripture you shall find there are three degrees of apostacy: first, the judgment watches; secondly, the affections cool; thirdly, the conversation grows worse: accordingly men are said to apostatize. Sometimes they are said to "depart from the faith," 1 Tim. iv. 1: there is the warping of the judgment. Sometimes they are said to lose their first love, Matt. xxiv. "Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall grow cold:" there is the cooling of their affections. Sometimes they are said to

* *Affectum non vocem audit Deus.*—Augustin.

Affectibus appropinquamus Deum.—Tostat. in Matt. tom iv. fol. 97.

make shipwreck of a good conscience, "to forsake the assemblies of the saints:" there is the declining in the conversation. But now if a man's affections be right set, they will keep both the judgment and the conversation. Ye see that if a thing be entangled, it is more hard to loosen it than otherwise; now what is it that doth entangle the soul and heart of man, but his affections? "No man (saith the apostle) that goeth to war entangleth himself," that is, by purchase or marriage. So that it is affection that entangles, and the more we are affected with any thing, the more we are entangled with it; and the more our hearts are entangled with any thing, the harder it is to part and to be loosened from it. Would you not, therefore, part or be loosened from Christ and the things of Christ? then surely you must set your affections on him and on things above. Thus upon all these considerations and reasons, ye see it is the duty of all the saints to set their affections on things that are above.

Now if it be our duty to set our affections on things above and not on things here below, then what an evil thing is it to set our affections on things below and not on things above. Shall the apostle, in the name of the Lord, command us to set our affections on things above and not on things below, and shall we set our affections on things below and not on things above? What is this but to walk contrary unto God? And hath not he said, that if we walk contrary to him, that he will walk contrary to us. Oh, what an evil thing is it, then, to set our affections on things below and not on things above.

But we do set our affections on things that are above, for we do truly affect the best things, and therefore we do set our affections on things above.

That is well; but are you sure that you do so?

It is a hard and difficult thing thus to set our affections on things above, for he that doth truly set his affections on things above, hath his sympathy and antipathy changed; look what that is which before he had an antipathy against, that he now hath a sympathy with; and that which he had a sympathy with, that he now hath an antipathy against. Now is it not a hard thing to change our antipathies into sympathies, and our sympathies into antipathies? Suppose a man hath an antipathy unto some meats, as cheese, or the like, is it not a

hard thing to love that most which he had an antipathy or natural hatred unto? Thus it is when the affections are taken off from things below and placed on things above. Surely, therefore, it is a very hard thing to have our affections to be thus transplanted and altered.

It is one thing to affect the best things, and to have some affections to the better things; another thing to set our affections on things that are above. It is said of Herod that he heard John the Baptist gladly; there he had some affections to the better things, yet his affections were not set on things above. The stony ground, in the parable, receives the word with joy; there is some affections to the better things, yet this is not the setting of the affections on things above, plainly. Yet it is one thing to affect the best things, and another thing to set our affections on things that are above. Yet,

Many there are who are deceived herein; for as some have gifts, parts and knowledge, and thereby think they are in the state of grace when there is no such matter; so some, having affections to the best things, think that they are godly when there is no such matter.

But, by way of convincement, if men did truly set their affections on things that are above, then they would not be so indifferent in the things of God as they are; they would not so easily be put by in their endeavours after them. This setting our affections on things above, is ordinarily described in Scripture by our hungering and thirsting after them: "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so doth my soul thirst after thee, O God," saith the psalmist. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Now when a man is hungry or thirsty he is not easily put by, but there is an inward necessity unto the thing desired; I must have drink or I die, I must have meat or I die; there is a necessity, and it cannot be answered without the thing. But now, though men say they do affect the best things, yet they are easily put by in their endeavours after them. Why? But because their affections are not set on things that are above.

If men's affections were thus set on things above, then they always carry these things about with them in their minds and thoughts. Look what a man hath set his affections upon, that he carries up and down with him; wherever he goes,

still he is thinking of it, and he cannot rid his heart of it, for his affections are set thereupon. But now men do not carry spiritual things about with them, they are not always thinking and minding of them wherever they come. Why? But because their affections are not truly set on them.

If your affections were thus set upon heavenly and spiritual things, then they would seek them in the first place; in the first of their age and time, in the first of their day and morning, in the first of their competition. If a man have a mind to a journey, and his heart and affections be set upon it, he will be early up in the morning to go that journey; or if he have any business to do, that he hath set his heart upon, he will do it before any other: and so, if our affections be set on heavenly things, then we will mind them in the first place: but now men do not seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness in the first place, but in the last place. Why? Because their affections are not truly set on things that are above.

If men's affections were thus truly set on things above, then they would be speaking of them, and love to hear others speaking of them. "I will speak of things concerning the King," saith David in the xlth Psalm, "for my heart is inditing (boiling, bubbling up) a good matter." And ye see this by experience, that a man or woman loves to speak of what they affect. If a man's heart be set on the world, and the things thereof, he loves to be speaking of them; if a woman's affections be set on fine clothes and fashions, she loves to be speaking of them, and to hear others speaking of them; for if one's affections be truly set on things above, he loves to be speaking of them: but now, though men say they affect the best things, yet they are not usually speaking of them. Why? But because their affections are not in truth set on them.

Look what a man is deeply affected with, that he is most indulgent to and tender of, he could not have a cold wind for to breathe upon it. Affections blind the judgment. *Perit iudicium cum res transit in affectum.* Great affections take away the very judgment; infirmities are no infirmities to affection, love will kiss the warts off the thing affected; oh, it is exceeding tender of the thing affected. But now men are not so tender of the name of God and spiritual things. Why? But because their affections are not set in truth upon things above.

If a man's affections were thus set on things that are above, then he would not be put off with any slight evidence of his interest in them. Look what a man doth much affect, that he will have a clear evidence of his interest therein, and will never be satisfied, until he have a substantial and a clear evidence of it. But now, though men say that they do affect the best things, yet they will be satisfied with slight evidences of their interest in them. Why? Because their affections are not truly set on things that are above. Indeed men think they are, because they have some affections to the better things. But if all these things be true, as they are most certain, then surely many are deceived in the great matter of the right placing of their affections.*

But suppose our affections be set on things above, or suppose they be not; what then?

Then is your portion accordingly. Look where your treasure is, there is your portion: if your treasure be in heaven, then is your portion there; if your treasure be in the earth, then is your portion there. And look where your heart and affections are, there is your treasure. And therefore if your affections be set on things above, then is your portion there; if on things below, then is your portion there. Yea,

If your affections be set on things that are above, then may you know that you have an interest in Christ, and in those things above. Affections are the pulse of the soul; if a man be alive, then his pulse beats, but if his pulse beats not, then is he dead. For if your affections beat after things that are above, then are you alive to God; but if this pulse beats not, then are you dead to God. Every man is as this pulse is, alive or dead: every man is as his affections are, *animus cujusque est quisque*; would ye so know whether ye be spiritually alive or dead. How doth this pulse of your affections beat? I confess indeed, that *affectio est meretrix*, a man should not measure himself by any present affection, nor by the degrees of his affections; but by the bent of his affections he should, and by the savour of them. Though I cannot know strong water by the colour of it, yet by the

* Hinc colligere possumus, illis omnes qui pollicentur sibi gaudia superna, cum interim non omnino sapiunt superna, quasi jucundo quodam somnio cœlectari, neque unquam illis rebus saturandos, qui nunquam sitire et esurire, ex animo solebant.—Davenant. in Col. iii. 1, 2.

taste and savour of it I may; and though I cannot know my spiritual estate by the degree of an affection, yet by the savour and bent of it I may. Therefore saith the psalmist, "Those that love the Lord hate evil." "By this (saith the apostle) shall ye know that ye are translated from death to life, because ye love the brethren." And if ye look into Scripture, how doth the Lord distinguish the godly from the ungodly, but by the kind and bent of their affections? "Let them that love thy name rejoice in thee," Psalm v. 11. "His delight is in the law of the Lord," Psalm i. "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments," Psalm cxii. 1. If therefore your affections be not drawn out and set upon things above, how will ye know that ye have any interest in them? Yea,

And if your affections be not set on things above, what shall relieve you in the day of your distress? Look what you most affect while you are well, that must be your relief when you are sick. Can you relieve yourselves with the things here below, when you are sick or count to die? But if you now set your affections on things above, then they will relieve you in the day of your distress.*

Then also you shall neither lose your affection nor the thing affected. If you set your affections on things that are below, you shall both lose the thing affected, and your affections too. Witness the case of Jonah's gourd. Now our affections are precious things, too good to be spilt and lost: lost they will be, and spilt they will be, if set on any thing on this side Christ; but if they be set on things above, you shall neither lose them nor the thing affected.†

And for the present these affections will make the ways of God easy to you. Hard things are easy to great affections, easy things are hard to him that hath no affection to them. You see how it is with the hunter, that runs up and down all day long, over hedges, through bushes, sweating and tearing himself yet with much ease and sweetness, because he affects the game; but if a man be put upon a work which he hath no affection to, then it is hard to him, though never so easy in itself. So spiritually, though the work of mortification

* *Terrena nec plenitudinem ferre possunt continenti, nec fulcimentum invitenti, nec fructum laboranti*—Parisiens.

† Ἰλη των ἀρετων.

and repentance be an hard work, yet it is easy to some, prayer easy, reading easy, meditating easy; why? because they have affection to these things: but if your affections be not set on things that are above, how shall the ways of God be made easy and sweet unto you? But besides all these things, ye know that

God is a jealous God; and though Christ be a loving Husband unto every soul that is espoused to him, yet he is very jealous of men's affections. What man is not jealous of his wife, when he sees that her affections are placed upon another? And are our affections placed upon things below; what doth that do but raise the jealousy of Christ against us? Jealousy is the rage of man, what is it then in Christ? Now therefore as you desire that the jealousy of the Lord Jesus may not be raised against you; that the ways of God may be made sweet and easy to you; that you may never lose your affections, or the things affected; that you may have a standing relief in the day of your distress; that you may have full evidence of the interest in those things that are above, and that your portion may lie there; oh, "set your affections on things that are above, and not on things on the earth."

What shall we do that we may raise and draw up our affections unto these things above? for our affections are indeed too much on things here below. How shall we draw them off from them, and draw them up to these better things that are above?

You must be sure to get a new heart, affections are the movings of the heart; an old heart cannot move unto things that are above: therefore you must get a new heart.*

Then you must get knowledge of these things that are above, for *ignoti nullam cupido*, there is no desire of unknown things, nor affections to them. Some desire knowledge and not affections; some desire affections, and do not labour after knowledge. Give me knowledge hearted with affections, and affections headed with knowledge; for as knowledge without affections makes wicked men secure, so affections without knowledge make godly men scrupulous. Study therefore to

* *Affectiones bonas vel malas causat voluntas bona vel mala.*—Augustin, tom. 5, fol. 169,

know more, and that knowledge shall be a light and lanthorn to the feet of your affections.

If you would draw up your affections unto things above, then put yourself under the most wooing discoveries of gospel love. Wooings roll out affections. Christ woos in the gospel; there doth the Spirit also breathe: and these motions of the soul can never be stirred up, but by the moving of the Spirit on the heart. "The living creatures went every one straight forward, whither the Spirit was to go," Ezek. i. 12. Now the Spirit moves in the wooing dispensations of the gospel; there then place yourselves, and give up your hearts unto these wooings.

And in case that any sensible dispensation fall upon you, either by affliction or enjoyment, let your eye affect your heart. Affections are sensible movings of the soul: doth the Lord therefore speak unto your soul by afflictions or sacraments? be sure that you improve these sensible dispensations to the working up of your affections unto things above.

And be much in meditation; for as reading and hearing do beget knowledge, so meditation doth beget affections. Either therefore you are in company, or you are alone: if you be in company, mutual exhortation will quicken your affections unto what is good; if ye be alone, then sit and meditate on the things that you have heard, or read, or seen, or done; and thus your affections will and shall be raised unto things above.

But my affections are most unsteady; though they be raised to-day, yet they are down to-morrow: what shall I do that I may so set my affections on things above, that they may be settled on them?

In case your affections have been raised, then take as much pains to keep your affections up, as you did to raise them up. And,

In case you feel your affections begin to cool and decline, then stir up yourself, and the grace of God that is in you. The prophet Isaiah complains, that none stirred up themselves to take hold on God. The like complaint may we take up now; for what is the reason that our affections die and cool away after raisings of heart, but because we do not stir up ourselves and hearts to take hold on God. In case, there-

fore, that your affections do begin to abate and cool, blow them up afresh, and stir up yourselves thereunto.

Be sure that you make use of the variety in the ways of God, which he hath given you. *Varietas refocillat*: variety is refreshing and affecting. God hath given us divers ordinances to be exercised in, that if we be dull and weary in one, we may go to another. If you be weary in prayer, you may go to reading; if weary in reading, then go to meditating; if weary in meditation, you may go to conference. If you will spend yourself only in one duty, there will grow a dulness and deadness upon you; but if you exercise yourself according to that variety which God hath given you, your heart will be kept up with an holy freshness unto things above, But,

Because that we are much affected with new things, therefore study the words and works of God much, and be always digging in them, then some new truth, or new discovery will arise upon you, which will affect your heart, and ever heap up your affections unto things above. And,

In case that you have any great affections unto what is good, be sure that you labour more and more to refine that affection; things refined keep longest; distilled waters keep longer than the leaves out of which the waters are distilled; if ye have rose leaves, they will not keep fresh so long as the water that you distil from them; those affections that you now have, it may be are sweet unto you, but they are as the rose leaves, somewhat of a drossier matter, which doth adhere to them, if you would now take those very good affections and refine or distil the same, then would they keep the longer. Go then and carry in your rose leaves unto God's still, and labour more and more to refine your best affections. Thus your affections shall not only be set on things above, but be settled on them.

And my beloved, is it not a good and blessed thing to have sweet and large affections for good? Surely it is a great mercy to have large affections in good and for good; some of us have had large affections to the things of the world, and shall we not have as large affections unto things that are above? Old men generally want affections, and young people do abound therein; but what will all our affections do us good, if they be set on things here below? Alas, we shall

but lose them, and the things affected too. But if you set your affections on things above, you shall neither lose your affections, nor the things affected. Wherefore let us all receive this exhortation, "Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth."

SERMON III.

HOW TO WALK WITH GOD IN OUR CALLINGS.

"Brethren, let every man wherein he is called therein, abide with God."—1 COR. VII. 20.

IN this chapter the apostle speaks to a case of conscience, whether it be lawful for the believing wife to depart from the unbelieving husband; which he resolves negatively, ver. 10. "If the unbelieving will depart, let him depart," saith the apostle, ver. 15, but the believer may not depart; which he persuadeth unto by divers arguments. The first is taken from the profit or good that the believer may do by his continuance, ver. 16, "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thine husband." The second is taken from the call of God unto that condition, ver. 17, "But as the Lord hath distributed unto every man, as the Lord hath called every man, so let him walk:" and this is our duty; for, says he, "So I ordain in all the churches." Why, but suppose a man be called being a servant, is he to abide therein? Yes, says the apostle, ver. 20, "Let every one abide in the same calling wherein he was called." Art thou called being a servant? care not for it, but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather; for, ver. 22, "He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman;" only saith he, "Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men," serving men only, but the Lord in them. And so, brethren, let every man wherein he is called, abide with God by calling: so the apostle doth understand that state and condition wherein God hath placed us. We do ordinarily take the word *calling* for our civil employment, and outward occupation; but the apostle takes it here for our outward state and condition, yet not excluding but including the other, for there is no state or

condition that we are called unto, but some occupation, employment, or calling, is to be used therein; and therefore in speaking to one of these, I shall speak to both. And so the doctrine is this :

That it is the duty of every man to abide or walk with God in his calling; take calling for your state or condition, or take calling for your ordinary way of employment, the doctrine is true, that it is our duty to abide or walk with God in our calling. It is commanded ver. 17, "As the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk." It is commanded again ver. 20, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." And it is commanded again ver. 24, "Brethren, let every one," &c. Surely therefore there is some great concernment in this. And ver. 20 he saith, "Let every man abide;" but in ver. 17 he saith, "As the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk;" and saith the text, "Here let him abide with God." Plainly then, it is the duty of every man to walk or abide with God in his calling. For the prosecuting of which truth I shall labour to shew you :

First, That it is a great mercy for a man to be placed in a good, lawful, and honest calling. A good calling is a great mercy.

Secondly, That a man being so placed, is to abide therein.

Thirdly, That it is our duty to walk with God in our calling.

Fourthly, What a man should do, that he may walk with God in his calling.

Fifthly, I shall give you some motives and encouragements to provoke you to this work, of walking with God in your callings.

First, therefore, I say, a good calling is a great mercy. It is a great mercy for a man to have an honest, good, and a lawful calling: whether you take the word *calling* for the calling of condition, or for the calling of employment, it is a great mercy to be planted in an honest and a lawful calling. For,

This was the condition of Adam in the state of innocency; then the Lord set Adam for to till the ground: he gave him an employment in the state of innocency, and there was nothing given him in the state of innocency but mercy. What-

ever God called him to, or put him upon before the fall, was mercy. Now in that state God put an employment upon him. Employment did not come in by the fall; it is not a badge of that conquest that the devil made upon us by the fall: therefore an honest calling is a great mercy. For thereby,

A man is kept from idleness. Idleness is the nurse of all wickedness; our vacation is the devil's term. *Homines nihil agendo, &c.*: * Men by doing nothing learn to do evil. Idleness, saith the heathen,† is the burying of a living man. *Hic situs est*. When a great senator of Rome would go live privately in his country house, that he might be more retired, Seneca coming by, said, *Hic situs est*; Here lies such a man: as you say over a tomb, Here lies such a man, and there lies such a man, so said he, *Hic situs est Vacia*; Here lies Vacia; for idleness is the burial of a living man, but what more contrary to a man than to be buried alive. Now the honest lawful employment or calling will keep ever from idleness. Yea,

Thereby also a man shall be kept from busy-bodiedness and too much meddling: the more idle a man is, the more apt he is to be too busy and meddling with others' matters. Mark, therefore, I pray, how they go together in 2 Thess. iii. 11: "We hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, being busy-bodies." Working not at all, and yet overworking, being busy-bodies; how should this be cured? Why, saith he, in the next verse, "Now them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work and eat their own bread." Either a man must eat his own bread or he will eat another's; if he eat another's constantly that will be uncomfortable; if he would eat his own bread, then let him work; if he do not work when he should, he will be at work when he should not; he will meddle with others' matters, and be a busy-body. "Now, therefore, I command and beseech you in the Lord (saith the apostle), that every one work." Thus shall a man be freed from busy-bodiedness. Yea,

A lawful honest calling both of condition and employment is God's ground. As no calling is the devil's ground, so a good and honest calling is God's ground. As an unlawful

* *Homines nihil egendo mala discunt egere.*—Sen.

† *Otium est vera hominis sepultura.*—Sen.

calling is the devil's ground, so a lawful calling is God's ground. And look when a man is out of his calling and place, he may then say, What do I here on the devil's ground? and look when a man is in his place and calling, then he may say, What dost thou here, Satan, tempting me? this is none of thy ground, this is God's ground to me. And so it is, indeed, for there God will appear to men. God did appear to the shepherds, bringing the news of Christ's birth; but where did he appear to them, but in their calling? They were keeping sheep, and suddenly they heard a noise of heavenly angels. He did appear to Peter and Andrew in their callings to follow Christ; but where did he appear to them, but in the way of their callings? They were casting their nets into the sea, and Christ came and said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Calling ground is appearance ground; there God appears unto his people. Surely, therefore, it is a great mercy to be on this ground, to have an honest lawful calling and employment. And that is the first thing,

Secondly, A man having a honest and a good calling, he is to abide therein. "Let every one abide therein," saith the apostle here, again and again. Now for the opening of this I shall briefly speak unto these four things:

1. That there is an aptness in us to change or lay down our callings.

2. That it is not absolutely unlawful so to do.

3. Yet ordinarily a man is to abide in his calling, and not readily to be removed from it.

4. I shall answer to some objections or cases of conscience about the change or relinquishment of our calling.

1. Therefore there is an aptness in us to change or lay down our callings, &c. Why should the apostle three times, one after another, call upon us to "abide in our callings?" And if ye look into 2 Thess. iii., ye shall find that as soon as the apostle had commanded the Thessalonians to work, and eat their own bread by working, verse 10, he presently adds, "But ye, brethren, be not weary of well doing." Why so? But because there is an aptness in us, and an itching disposition to leave and desert our callings.

2. But it is not absolutely unlawful for a man to leave or to change his calling. This in some cases thou mayest do, says

Peter Martyr, *modo teipsam non queras, vel timere agas*, so that you do not seek yourself, nor be rash therein. For possibly a man may be qualified for higher employments than his own calling bears. In this case, David left his calling of a shepherd and became a king; Amos left the calling of a herdman and became a prophet; the apostles left the calling of their fishing and became apostles. Possibly a man may be qualified for better and higher employments, and in that case it is lawful to change or leave his calling.* Or,

Possibly a man may see the same hand of God leading him out of his calling which did bring him into it. So when Noah had the same command to go out of the ark that he had to go in, then he went out, but not before, though the waters were gone off the earth. Now sometimes a man may hear the same voice of God leading him out of his calling, which did bring him in, and in that case it is lawful for a man to leave or lay down his calling. Or,

Possibly the porter that standeth at the door of a man's calling may let him out; there are porters which God hath set at the door of every condition: if a man be a single man, and would change his condition, and his parents are unwilling, then he may not go out of that calling or condition, for the parents, which are the porters of the door, do not open to him. There are porters at the door of every condition; possibly this porter may open the door, and then it is lawful for a man to change or lay down his calling. Or,

Possibly a man may be forced through want, to change or desert his calling. Paul though a preacher and apostle, was sometimes forced to work with his hands. And though Musculus was a good and excellent preacher, yet he was sometimes forced to work, and to dig in the city ditch or moat, for his living.† Possibly I say, a man through urgent necessity and want, may be forced to leave or desert his calling; and then, and in that case, it is lawful for him to do it: so that it is not absolutely unlawful for a man to change or lay down his calling. Yet,

3. Though it be lawful in some case to do so, yet

* Si ad magistratum vel ecclesie regimen adcersitus fueris justa ratione, tum tuipe non est qui te transferas ex una vocatione in aliam sed a Deo promoveris. Sic ab aratro ad consilium voleris rondis.—Pet. Mart. in cap. p. 96.

† Idem statuendum est, cum aliqua gravi necessitate compelleris, et subeas non as conditiones.—Pet. Mar. ibid.

ordinarily a man is to abide in his calling, and not readily to be removed from it: for a good calling is the Lord's gift.

It is God that calls a man to that state, condition, or employment. Now a man should not readily leave or desert that calling or employment which God hath called him to, or owned and blessed him in. For how do I know whether God will own or bless me when I shall desert that calling, wherein he hath appeared unto me. It is my duty to follow God, and not to go before him; as God hath distributed to every man. As the Lord hath called every man, so let him walk. God doth distribute and carve out our callings for us. Has the Lord therefore called me to a place or employment, then am I with thankfulness to walk therein. It is not for the private soldier, saith Peter Martyr, to appoint his own station; but look where he is set by his commander, there he is to abide. Has the Lord therefore set me in this or that calling or employment, then am I to wait on God, and abide in it, and not readily to be removed from it.

There is no calling either of employment or condition, but God may be served and enjoyed therein. No calling or employment so mean, but a man may honourably serve, and comfortably enjoy God therein. Art thou called being a servant, care not, saith the apostle; why? For he that is called being a servant, is the Lord's free man, verse 22. Likewise also, he that is called being free, is the Lord's servant. I remember I heard a preacher say some twenty-five years since, that a man is never ashamed of his calling, though it be never so mean, but a man is ashamed of his sin, although he be never so great. If, says he, you call a man tinker or cobbler, yet he is not ashamed thereof, because it is his calling; but if you call a man drunkard, or adulterer, he is ashamed thereof, because that is none of his calling. A man may honourably serve God in his calling, though it be never so mean, and he may comfortably enjoy God in his calling although it be never so great.

4. But that is the reason why I would lay down my calling, because I cannot serve God so well therein. I meet with many temptations, provocations, and impediments, which hinder me in the service of God; if I were free from this calling, then I should be more free for God, and should be

more free from those snares and provocations that I now meet with. But for answer :

Are you sure of that? Luther tells us of a certain man that was given to anger, and to avoid provocation, he would go live alone, as an hermit; and going to the well with his pitcher, somewhat displeased him, and he threw down his pitcher, and he broke it in anger; which when he had done, and reflecting on himself, and his own actions, he said, Well, now I see it is not in my condition, but in my heart and self, that doth cause anger and provocation; therefore I will return to my calling again. And when men speak at the rate of that objection, what do they do, but lay the fault of their anger and provocation upon their condition, and excuse themselves? But our Saviour saith, That that comes from within, that defiles a man, not that which comes from without. It is not the condition, or the place, or the employment, or calling, that defiles the man, but that that comes from within, that defiles the man. Mr. Greenham* being asked whether a man might avoid the doing of a thing whereunto he is called, because he feels corruption in himself, he said, In avoiding society, you shall cover, but not cure your infirmities; and though you depart from men, you cannot go out of yourself; it is not the use of the creatures, but the love of the creatures, that hinder from good. I never look, said he, for a better estate than that wherein I am; but I oft prepare for a worse. And I pray tell me, beloved, was not Joshua, when Moses died, and he was to lead the people into Canaan, a man of great employment? "Yes even then," saith the Lord to him, "this book of the law, shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night," Josh. i. 8. And was not David a man of great employments? Yet, says he, "At evening, morning, and at noonday will I pray, yea seven times a day; yea, I meditate on thy law all the day long." Surely therefore our hinderance to good, doth not lie in our calling, place, or employment; but it lies within ourselves. And therefore why should we lay down our callings to be rid thereof.

5. But this is not my reason, I know that a man may serve God in the worst of honest callings, but callings are made for maintenance. Now I have enough to maintain

* Greenham on Calling.

myself and mine; and therefore why may not I now lay down my calling?

Because you are mistaken. A calling is not only to maintain yourself and your family, but it is an ordinance of God to preserve and keep you from idleness: whereby you are not only to maintain yourself, but to help others, and therefore ye find that Paul saith, "he wrought with his hands;" not only to maintain himself but others. "You know (says he) yea, yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me," Acts xx. 34. He did not only work occasionally to maintain himself, but others also. And if ye look into Eph. iv., the same church that he spake to in Acts xx., ye shall find that he layeth his injunction on them and us: "Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth," verse 28. Surely therefore a calling is not only appointed to raise a maintenance for ourselves: and therefore, though you can live, and have outward means enough to maintain both you and others, yet you may not therefore leave or desert your calling; it is that trust that God hath committed to you, and you must make good your trust.

But though I may not leave my calling altogether, yet may I not leave it for a time, that on the week-day I may go and hear and enjoy the ordinances?

Yes, surely, for man is not made for the calling, but the calling is made for man. Ye read of a converted woman in John iv., that when she had a taste of Christ's preaching, she left her pitcher or pail, and went and called others to hear the same. And so, though you do not break your pail or pitcher, yet you may leave your pail or pitcher for a time, to tend on the words of Christ. Did not the Jews go up three times a year to Jerusalem from their several habitations, employments, and callings? Is it not said, "That the converted Jews did continue daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house?" Acts ii. 46. Indeed God will have mercy and not sacrifice; but though ye may not leave or lay down your callings readily, yet for a time you may leave them, that you may attend on the ordinances. But though you may so leave your callings for a

time, yet you must abide therein with God. And so I come to the third general, which is this :

Thirdly, That it is our duty, or the duty of every man to walk with God in his calling, not barely to abide therein, but to abide and walk with God therein. For thus,

It was so from the beginning. Adam had a calling, even in the state of innocency, but therein he was to walk with God.

And if a man do not walk with God in his calling, how can he walk with God at all. A man is not said to walk with God because he prays in the morning or evening ; walking is a constant thing. Now it is the duty of every man to walk with God ; and therefore it is his duty to walk with God in his calling.

Thereby a man is distinguished from the world and the men of the world. A man is not therefore one of another world, because he deserts his calling that he may give himself unto his devotions : for then the monks, and nuns, and anabaptists, should be men and women of another world ; he is a man of another world, “that doth use the world as if he used it not.” Christ himself was in the world, “but not of the world.” And if you would not be of the world, you must not go out of the world, but you must walk with God in the world. Hereby you shall be distinguished from the world, and men of the world. Now it is our duty so to walk, as it may appear that we are not of this world. Therefore it is our duty to walk with God in our callings, not only to abide therein, but to walk with God therein.*

This is that which will sweeten and elevate your callings : every thing is raised or depressed as God is present with it or absent from it. Bethlehem was but a little city, therefore says the prophet Micah, chap. v. 2, “Thou Bethlehem, though thou be little amongst the thousands of Judah ;” yet, Matt. ii., it is said, “And thou Bethlehem art not the least.” Why ? Because Christ was born there. Look what place, or town,

* At hodie summa habeter pietas, si quis domi relectis liberis et uxore aut etiam grandævivis parentibus, vel Hierosolymam adeat, vel in monasterium ; vide quo impudentiæ ventum est in ecclesiam Christi, nec in pari proxsus dementia decipiunt hodiè et catebaptistæ, relictis enim uxoribus liberis et familiis (tanquam attoniti et fanatici homines circumstant, atque ita se pomariam regni Christi propagularos dejerunt ; tum interim rem familiarem concoquent subvertantque, totam et ecclesiam Christi miris modis obturbent.—Bullinger in 1 Tim. v. 8.

or condition that is where Christ is, though it be little in itself, yet it is raised by him. The more, therefore, that you walk with God in your calling, the more your calling is sweetened and elevated. And yet further,

Every man is as he is in his calling; a man hath no more grace than he may or can use in his calling; and though I have all parts and gifts, so as I can remove mountains, yet if I be not gracious in my calling, all is nothing, my parts and gifts are but as sounding brass and as tinkling cymbal. My calling is that ground whereon I am to plant all my gifts and graces. If I have grace, it will appear in my calling; if I be wicked, it will appear in my calling: every man is as he is in his calling. Surely, therefore, it is not only our duty to abide, but to abide and walk with God in our callings. And that is the third general.

Now, by way of application, I might speak something in reference to every branch of the doctrine. If a good calling be a great mercy, then why should not parents provide honest callings for their child, and children be thankful to God and their parents for such provision? And if it be our duty to abide with God in our callings, then why should not every man be contented with his condition, whatever it be, though it be never so mean? And if it be our duty to walk with God in our callings, then why should we not make it our business, not to be rich by our callings, but to walk with God in our callings. But you will say,

Fourthly, What should a man do that he may walk with God in his calling? This is of daily concernment. How should we, therefore, so walk in our callings, that we may walk with God in our callings?

I answer negatively and affirmatively.

Negatively. If you would walk with God in your calling, you must not be ignorant of the way of your calling; for if you take up a calling, and are ignorant of the way and mystery thereof, you may tempt God therein. "The wisdom of the wise (saith Solomon) is to direct his way," his own particular way. Every man should be the master of his art.* Possibly a man may step into a calling both of condition and employment before he knows the way and the manner of it.

* Q. Quænam requiruntur ad honestam vocationem honeste exercendam?

R. 1. Requiritur peritia. 2. Attentio ad officia propria. 3. Sedula dili-

But as in marriage, though the parties meet in the flesh without any sanctified means, yet if God afterwards give them grace to live holily together, he sheweth that not only their corrupt meeting is pardoned, but that now they are blessed. So, though a man enter into a calling without gifts at the first, yet if God afterwards furnish him with able gifts, he doth not only shew his former sin, in running into that calling, is pardoned, but that he is blessed. But if a man be not the master of his art, and gifted for his calling, then he leaves God therein, and doth not walk with God.

If you would walk with God in your calling, you must not be negligent in your place and calling. Diligence in our callings is commanded, commended and rewarded in Scripture. It is commanded: "Whatever is in the power of thy hand I do, do it with all thy might;" "Be not slothful in business, go to the pismire, O sluggard." It is commended: "He that is diligent in his business shall stand before princes." And it is rewarded: "For the diligent hand maketh rich." Now if God doth command, commend, and reward diligence in our calling, then surely you cannot walk with God and be negligent therein.

If you would walk with God in your calling, you must not deal unjustly or unrighteously in your dealings with men. "God hath shewed thee, O man, what is good," saith the prophet, Micah vi. 8. "And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Plainly, then, a man cannot walk humbly with God that doth not deal justly and righteously with men in his calling.

If you would walk with God in your calling, then you must not be too familiar with your calling. God hath given you a calling that it may be a nurse to you, and your grace. Children sometimes are so fond of their nurse that they regard not their parents; and if you be too fond of your calling, you will forget the God of your calling. "Let him that marrieth be as if he married not (says the apostle), and he that useth the world as if he used it not." You will go with an apron into your shop that you may keep your clothes clean,

gentia. 4. Providentia in opportunitate commoda observanda. 5. Fortitudo et constantia in difficultatibus superandis. 6. Moderatio appetitionis lucri. 7. Religiosa sanctificatio omnium laborem.—Ames Cas. consc. lib. v. cap. 46.

and hath not your soul as much need of an apron when you are in your shop and your calling. If the ivy clings too close unto the oak, it hindereth the growth of the oak; so if your callings cling too close to you, and you to your callings, it will hinder your spiritual growth. The world may be well used at a distance: it is not evil to meddle with the world, but to mingle with it. Would ye, therefore, walk with God in your place, then you must not be too familiar with the world and the things thereof. Thus negatively. Now

Affirmatively. If you would walk with God in your place and calling, then you must observe what those snares and temptations are that are incident unto your calling, and take heed thereof; such there are, for says the apostle, chap. vii. 23, "He that is unmarried, careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife." And this saith he, verse 35, "I speak for your own profit, not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction." Plainly, then, there are snares and temptations that are incident unto all, and the best conditions and callings; and if we would attend unto God without distractions, we must observe what these snares and temptations are, and take heed thereof.

If you would walk with God in your calling, then you must live by faith in your callings. "For by faith Enoch walked with God." "And the life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Thereby you shall be kept from covetousness and love of the world. "This is our victory, whereby we overcome the world, even our faith." Thereby you shall be contented with your condition, whatever it be; thereby you shall be able to leap over a wall, and over all those difficulties that you meet with in your callings; thereby you shall live sweetly and graciously in your calling, and walk with God. Now if you would live by faith in your calling, then you must have an eye to God's commandment, promise, and providence. You must go to your callings as to God's ordinance; otherwise you cannot look with both eyes to God, but with one eye to the world, and with the other to God. But you see that he hath taught us, that you cannot look with one eye to heaven, and with the other eye

to the earth ; but if you will look to the heavens, both eyes will look to heaven. So if you will look to God, you must look with both eyes to God. The way, therefore, to look with both eyes to God in your calling, is to go to your calling as to God's ordinance ; and because faith and the promise are as buckle and clasp, the one cannot be without the other. Therefore you must observe those promises that are made to your calling, and rest thereon. And because God doth sometimes guide us by his eye in the way of our callings, therefore you must have an eye to providence ; and whatever you do in the way of your calling, you must quietly leave the issue of it and success to God. And thus shall you live by faith in your calling, and so walk with God in your place.

If you would walk with God in your calling, then whatever you do therein, do all to the glory of God. " Whether you eat or drink, (saith the apostle,) do all to the glory of God." If I work in my calling for mine own profit only, then I walk with myself therein ; but if I do all for God's glory, not mine own profit, then I walk with God in my calling.

If you would walk with God in your particular calling, then be sure that you so manage your calling, that your general calling may not be an hindrance, but an help unto your particular ; and thus your particular calling may be no hindrance, but an help to your general calling. Woe to that calling which eats up prayer. The particular and general callings are joined together by God : " Those that God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Be sure, therefore, that your general calling be an help to your particular, and your particular no hindrance to your general. Thus shall you walk with God in your calling. And,

If you would walk with God in your calling, then be sure that you turn as God turns, sweetly complying with his dispensations in the way of your calling. If two men walk together, when one turns the other turns, and if one do not turn as the other turns, they cannot walk together ; but if one turns as the other turns, then they walk together. So in our walking with God, it may be God's dispensations in my calling are comfortable, then am I to rejoice and to praise the Lord. It may be God turns and his dispensation is sad, in the way of my calling ; then am I to humble myself before

the Lord, and to comply with his dispensation; which if you do in your calling, then shall you walk with God therein. Yet,

If you would walk with God in your calling, then you must judge of things in your calling, as God judges, and measure things by his bushel. We are very apt to measure and judge of things in our callings, by the verdict of the means and second causes: if the means and second cause smile, then we smile, though God frown; if the means and second cause frown, then we frown, though God smile: if the second cause be big, and promise a great mercy or blessing to us, then in the strength of the second cause, we promise it to ourselves, though God threatens the contrary; if the second cause or means threaten a misery, then in the strength thereof, we threaten ourselves with that misery, though God promise the contrary blessing. This is not to walk with God in our callings. He that walks with God in his place and calling, must judge and measure things according unto God's verdict. But,

If you would walk with God in your place and calling, then you must spiritualize your particular calling with heavenly things, and the things of God; not put all upon a morning and an evening prayer; but your particular calling must be sprinkled with holy meditations and gracious speeches. Thus it was with Abraham's servant when he went for Rebecca, he sprinkled his service with meditation, prayer, and godly speech. And if ye look into Judges v. ye shall find that upon a glorious victory that God gave to his people, it is said, ver. 11, "They that are delivered from the noise of the archers, in the places of drawing of water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord." Not only at their church meetings, and in prayer or duty, but while they are drawing of water. Thus our particular calling is to be sprinkled with heavenly things; and if you do thus, then shall you walk with God in your calling. And oh, that there were an heart in us all, thus to walk with God in our callings. This is every man's work, and every day's work. Now, therefore, that you may do it, give me leave by way of motive, to leave these few considerations with you.

If you walk with God in your particular calling, God will walk with you in your general calling. Is it not a great

mercy to meet with God in your prayers and duties; if you go up to him in your particular callings, he will come down to you in your general.

Then shall your calling be a blessing to you indeed, and you shall have another, further and greater reward than the wealth of your calling. "Servants obey your masters in all things, not with eye-service as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord," Col. iii. 22. "And whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men," ver. 23. "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ." It seems then, by this scripture, that though a man be a servant, yet therein he may serve the Lord, and walk with God; and if he do so, he shall not only have wages from his master, but of the Lord he shall receive the reward of the inheritance. Now he is best paid, which the Lord pays; the Lord will not only give him his outward wages, but an everlasting inheritance. Oh, what a good thing it is to walk with God in our callings. Yea,

Thereby the knots and difficulties of your callings shall be taken off, and your way made easy; that God whom ye walk with in your callings, will lift you over all the stiles that are in your callings. If a child walk with his father in the fields, when they come at a high stile, the father lifts him over it. So if you walk with God in your callings, then he will lift you over all the stiles and difficulties of your callings. Yea,

Thereby you shall be kept from the sins and temptations of your calling. A man's calling is like to a great log or piece of timber in a green field; look upon the field, and you see it all green and handsome, but take up the log or timber that lies in the midst thereof, and there you find worms, and sows, and vermin that do breed under it. So look upon a man's carriage, and generally it is very green, civil and handsome; but if ye look under his calling, you will find nothing but sows, worms, and vermin. Now this walking with God in your calling, will keep you from the vermin of your callings. Yea,

Thereby shall your way of godliness be convincing and winning. "As God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk and abide with

God," saith the apostle in this chapter. Why so? "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt not save thine husband;" or, "how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" Yea, says the apostle Peter, "Likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also without the word, may be won by the conversation of the wives," 1 Peter iii. 1. It is not therefore a morning or evening duty, though that is good, that is so winning; but a constant walking with God in our places and callings, is convincing and winning. Yea,

Thereby also you shall be fit to die, and leave all the world with ease. The more a man runs his heart into the world in his calling, the harder it will be to die; and the more a man walketh with God in his calling, the fitter he will be to die, and to leave all the world with ease. Now therefore as you do desire, that you may be fit to die, that your ways of godliness may be convincing and winning, that the knots and difficulties of your callings may be taken off, that your callings may be a blessing to you indeed, and that God may meet and walk with you in your general calling, labour more and more to abide and walk with God in your particular calling; which that you may do, labour to be master of your art, be diligent in your place, deal not unjustly with men in your calling, be not too familiar with your callings, but keep your due distance from them; observe what the temptations and snares are, that are incident, and take heed thereof; labour more to live by faith in your calling; let not your general eat up your particular, nor your particular destroy your general. Whatever you do in your calling, "do all to the glory of God," be sure that you turn as God turns, give when he gives, measure all things in your callings by his bushel, and be sure that you always sprinkle your outward employments with some heavenly refreshments. And thus brethren, "Let every one wherein he is called therein abide with God." For it is the duty of every man to abide and walk with God in his calling. And thus I have done with this argument, How to walk with God in our callings.

SERMON IV.

OF GOOD AND BAD COMPANY, HOW TO AVOID THE ONE, AND IMPROVE THE OTHER.

“I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.” Ps. cxix. 63.

MY desire now is to speak something of good and bad company, and therefore have made choice of this scripture. In this section the Psalmist laboureth to confirm his faith, and to comfort himself in the certainty of his own grace, by seven or eight properties of a true believer. The first is drawn from his choice. A good man makes a right choice, he chooses God for his portion, verse 51, “Thou art my portion, O Lord.” The second is drawn from the fixation of his resolution. A good man is fully resolved for to walk with God. “I have said I would keep thy words,” verse 57. The third is drawn from his earnest desire of God’s love and favour. A good man doth desire the favour of God above all things, “I intreated thy favour with my whole heart,” verse 58. The fourth is drawn from his self examination. A good man doth ponder, weigh, and examine his own doings and ways, “I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies,” verse 59. The fifth is drawn from his readiness to keep God’s commandments. A good man doth not put off or delay his duty, “I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments,” verse 60. The sixth is drawn from his adhesion to the ways of God in times of opposition. A good man will not be driven from the ways of God by the opposition of men. “The bands of the wicked have robbed me, but I have not forgotten thy law,” verse 61. The seventh is drawn from the thankfulness of his disposition under all dispensations. A good man will give thanks to God whatever his condition be. “At midnight I will give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous judgments,” verse 62. And the eighth is drawn from his company. A good man will keep company with those that are good; “I am a companion of all that fear thee.” Which is explained by these following words, “and of them that

keep thy precepts, I am a companion of all that fear thee." Though I be a king, and they be never so poor, I, even I, David the king, "am a companion of all that fear thee, and do keep thy precepts." Where then you may observe thus much, that a good man will have good company. It is the property of a good man to keep good company, his companions are such as do fear the Lord. Yea, though they be much beneath him, yet if they be such as do fear the Lord, he will not boggle at their acquaintance and fellowship. "I am a companion," says David the king, "of all those that fear thee." So that a good man will have or keep good company. For the opening and clearing whereof,

First, We will inquire what this good company is, and when a man may be said for to keep good company.

Secondly, Why, and upon what account a good man will have good company.

Thirdly, I will answer unto some objections or cases of conscience, about this company-keeping, and so come to the application.

As for the first, If you ask what this good company is, I answer,

That is not good company which the world calls good company, nor he a good companion which the world calls a good companion. If a man will drink and take off his cups, he is a good fellow in the mouth of the world. And if a man be a jolly, frolic, merry man, that can make you laugh with some pretty tales and jests, he is a good companion; but if he be a good natured man, and will not be angry, then he is a good companion indeed. This is the world's good company, or good companion, but I say that is not good company which the world calls good company.

Neither is that good company which a man's own engagements calls good company; if a man be a good man, and I have a mind to hate him, then I will first make him wicked, that there may be room for my hatred: if a man be a wicked man, and I have a mind to keep him company, or love him, then I will first make him good, and say he is good, that there may be room for my love and fellowship with him. It was a custom amongst the Jews, that the king should once in a year read over the chief part of Deuteronomy in the audience of the people, and as their stories tell us, when Agrippa

came to those words, "One from among thy brethren thou shalt set king over thee; thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother." Agrippa's eyes trickled down with tears, in remembrance that he was not of the seed of the Jews. Whereupon, saith the story, the people cried out three times, Fear not, Agrippa, for thou art our brother. So that when men please, they can for their own engagements make a man a brother, and a good companion; but I say, that is not good company which my own judgment and engagement calls good company. But that is good company, which the saints generally call good company, and that is good which the Scripture calls good company. "Such are all those that do fear the Lord, and do keep his precepts," for so saith David, "I am a companion of all those that fear thee, and do keep thy precepts."

Now a man is not said to keep company with others, either good or bad, because he doth occasionally fall into their society. Possibly a good man may occasionally meet with, or fall into the society of those that are wicked, yet he is not thereby said for to keep wicked company, neither is this forbidden; for says the apostle, "I have written to you that you should not keep company with," &c. 1 Cor. v., yet not altogether, for then you should go out of the world: and possibly a bad man may occasionally meet with good people, and be in their companies: yet he is not therefore said to keep good company, it is not this or that occasion, that doth make a companion.

Neither is a companion properly one whom a man doth ordinarily deal with in a way of trade and commerce. For the christians in the apostles' time, did ordinarily trade and commerce with the heathens, yet did not keep company with them. But a companion properly is such an one as I do choose to walk and converse with ordinarily in a way of friendship: so that company-keeping doth imply three things, first it is matter of choice, and therefore relations as such, are not properly said to be our companions; secondly it implies a constant walking and converse with another, and so it is expressed, Job xxiv. 8; Prov. xiii. 20. And thirdly, this ordinary converse or walking with another, must be in a way of friendship, and upon this account. He that Samson used as his friend is called his companion. Judges xiv. 20.

A companion therefore properly is such an one as I do choose to walk and converse ordinarily with in a way of friendship. The apostle Paul expresses it by a word that signifies to mingle. "I have written to you that you keep not company with the world;" 1 Cor. v. 11; the word in the original is, that you mingle not with such. There is a meddling with the world, and there is a mingling with the world. It is not unlawful to meddle with the things of the world, but it is unlawful to mingle one's heart with the things of the world; so it is not unlawful to meddle with the persons of the world, but to mingle with them is unlawful, and look, when I do choose the men of the world for to walk and converse with ordinarily, in a way of friendship, then do I keep them company; but if men be such as fear God, and do keep his precepts, and I choose out such to walk and converse ordinarily with, then I am said for to keep them company. And thus now you see what good company is, and when a man may be said to keep bad or good company.

Secondly, Well but, then, why and upon what account will a good man keep good company? Why it is his duty to do it, he cannot but do it, and it is best for him to do it. It is his duty: for if it be his duty to avoid evil company, then it is his duty to have good company. Now for bad company, you know what Solomon says, Prov. i. 10, "If sinners entice ye consent thou not to them;" verse 15, "Walk not thou in the way with them, but refrain thy feet from their path." And again, chap. iv. 14, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." Was not God greatly displeased with Jehoshaphat for his walking and fellowship with Ahab and his house? Read, I pray, what is said 2 Chron. xix. 2, "And Jehu, the son of Hanani the seer, went out to meet Jehoshaphat, and said to him, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord, therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." And ye know what is said in Ps. i., "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, that standeth not in the way of sinners, and sitteth not in the seat of the scornful." It may be you will say that you do not sit in the seat of the scornful, though you be amongst them ordinarily, but do not you

stand in the way of sinners, nor walk in their counsel? If you be found either in their counsel, or in their way, or in their seat, sitting, standing, or walking amongst them, the blessing doth not belong to you. If you be a professor, you ought not to be found in such company. It is the duty of all those that fear, to avoid evil company; and as it is their duty to avoid evil company, so it is their duty to frequent good company. Cant. i. 5, "If thou knowest not, O thou fairest among women," saith Christ to the spouse, "go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock," Cant. i. 8. And Solomon doth not only enjoin and commend this duty, but doth encourage us unto it; for, saith he, "He that walketh with the wise, shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed," Prov. xiii. 20. So that it is a good man's duty to keep company with those that are good, and as it is his duty, so he can do no other; his spiritual disposition doth naturally lead him unto it. You say, Birds of a feather will together. And what is the reason that the sheep doth converse with the sheep, and not with the swine; that the pigeon doth converse with the pigeon, and not with the raven? But because their disposition doth naturally lead them to converse with those that are in nature like to them. Now the divine nature of all good men is spiritually the same naturally; therefore as a good man, he cannot but converse and walk with those that are good; and as he can do no other, so it is best for him to do so; for in good company there is much safety; as there is danger in bad, so in good company there is great safety. Our way to heaven is a journey, and we are all travelling thither; now ye know that in a great journey, a good day, and a good way, and good company is very comfortable; so in our journey to heaven, a clear gospel day, a plain, even way and good company, is a great mercy, and a sweet privilege; insomuch as John, that wrote the book of the Revelation, glories in it; for, I pray, mark how he styles himself: I, John, am the penman of this book, and would you know, saith he, what my title is, it is this, "Your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," Rev. i. 9. It seems then, 1. That he that lies in Christ's bosom, will lie in the bosom of the saints; of all the disciples it is written of John, that he was the beloved disciple that lay in Christ's bosom: now says he

to all the saints, "I am your brother and companion." 2. It seems by this Scripture, that he that is our true companion will keep us company into tribulation, "I am your brother and companion in tribulation." 3. You may here see, that those who are the saints' companions in tribulation, shall be companions also with them in the kingdom of Christ, "I am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." 4. That it is an honour, mercy, and a great privilege to be a companion with the saints, though it be in matter of tribulation, for herein doth John glory, "I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation;" plainly then, it is a great mercy and a sweet privilege to have good company. But to clear up this thing to you, I shall only make use of one argument, which though one, hath many in the bosom of it.

Thus if there be much benefit to be found in good company, and much hurt and mischief in bad company, then it is best for every good man to keep good company. Now in good company there is much benefit and in bad company there is much mischief. For,

As for the benefit of good company. If in case you be going into evil, ready to fall into what is evil, he will put forth his hand, and will hold you from it, saying, O my friend, do not this thing, for it is displeasing unto your God and my God. Ye know how it was with David, when he was going to destroy Nabal and all his house, he met with Abigail, and by her counsel was diverted from it, insomuch as he blessed God for her counsel. "Ye are the salt of the earth," saith Christ. Now there are two properties of salt, it keeps the meat from putrefaction, and it makes it savoury: so will good company do, they will make you more savoury in your spirits and keep you from that corruption and putrefaction which you are apt unto. And,

As good company will keep you from evil, so they will provoke, whet, and stir you up unto what is good, yea though they be of lower and meaner parts and gifts than yourself: for as the chips and shavings of wood and little sticks will set the great blocks and billets on fire, so warm and lively christians, though weak in parts, will warm and put life into others, though in parts and gifts much beyond them. Heb.

x. 24, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love, and good works." Solomon tells you, "That the lips of the righteous disperse knowledge," Prov. xv. 7; and if you look into verse 4, ye shall find, "that the wholesome tongue (which only dwells in the mouth of the righteous) is a tree of life." The word in the original is an healing tongue; there is a cutting wounding tongue, and there is an healing tongue. Now the healing wholesome tongue is a tree of life: do you therefore desire to gather and eat of the tree of life? Then must you keep company with an healing, not with a cutting and a wounding tongue. And if ye look into Prov. xx. 21, ye shall find, "that the tongue of the righteous, is as choice silver; the heart of the wicked is nothing worth;" though he saith, his heart is good, and as good as any man's, though he cannot speak of good as others do. Yet says Solomon, The heart of the wicked is nothing worth; but the tongue of the just, or righteous, is not only as silver, but as choice silver. And do you ask wherein the worth of his lips doth consist? I will tell you, saith Solomon, "The lips of the righteous feed many." Do you therefore desire to be fed, and to meet with such company as shall feed your soul, then you must keep company with those that are good and righteous. And if ye look into verse 11, ye shall find he saith, "That the mouth of the righteous is a well of life." Do you therefore desire to draw up the waters of life? Then must you get your bucket, and come unto the mouth and company of the righteous. Now if the mouth of the righteous be a "well of life," and "his lips be as choice silver, that will feed many," what a good thing is it, and profitable, for a man to keep company with those that are good. Yet,

As good company will provoke unto what is good, so in case you fall at any time into evil, they will stretch forth their hand and lift you up again. For, says Solomon, "Two are better than one: For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth: for he hath not another to lift him up." Eccles. iv. 9. Again, "If two lie together, then have they heat; but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him." Are you therefore under some great temptations, and do you fear that Satan will prevail against you,

then you must keep good company; for "if one prevail against him, two shall withstand." Or, is your heart grown cold and dead? Then must you keep good company; for, "If two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone?" Or, are you fallen into any sin? Then must you keep good company: "for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow?" Is it not a good thing then to keep good company? Surely it is. Yet,

As good company will help to lift you out of the mire when you are fallen into it, so in case you be in any outward great strait, good company will help to pull you out of that ditch and strait. For what a great strait was Daniel in, when the king would put him to death, unless he told him his dream, and the meaning of it. How is it possible for me to know what another dreams? Yet Daniel must die unless he tell the king his dream. Well, what doth Daniel do in this case? He goes up to God in his prayers. And chap. ii. 17, "He went to his house, and made the things known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah his companions." But why did he go to them? It seems they were praying companions; for says the text, "He told it to them, that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret, that Daniel and his fellows should not perish." Well, and what then? "Then (verse 19) was the secret revealed unto Daniel." Suppose Daniel's companions had been drunken, wicked companions, what help could he have had from them? But they were praying companions, and a praying companion is a great help in the time of strait. And,

As good company is a great help to a man in the day of his straits, so it is a continual blessing. For says the psalmist, Ps. cxxxiii., "Behold how good and pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity; it is like the precious ointment upon the head," &c. "It is as the dew of Hermon," &c. "For there the Lord commandeth his blessing, and life for evermore." It is not barely said, that there God blesseth, or doth pronounce a blessing; but, "there he commands his blessing," makes it effectual, "there he commands his blessing." Was not Laban's house blessed with the company of Jacob? Was not Potiphar's house blessed with the company of Joseph? Surely where good company is,

there is God's blessing; yea, "There he commandeth his blessing, and life for evermore." It is recorded of one heathen, that when he would set his house and land to sale, he caused the crier to proclaim, *Bonum habet vicinum*; thinking that it would sell the better for a good neighbour: and surely a good neighbour is a good commodity, and good company is a great mercy. "There the Lord commandeth his blessing, and life for evermore." And thus ye now see the benefit of good company.

As for the mischief of bad company, there is much mischief to be found therein. For as good company will provoke and quicken you unto what is good, so bad company will cool and quench you to what is good. Bad company is a great quench coal, and will abate your affections unto what is good. Will not water mixed with wine, abate of the strength of the wine? so will bad company abate your strength of affections unto what is good. Peter Martyr,* observing that many of the Jews stayed behind in Babylon, when others came out of Babylon with much heat and zeal to build God's house; he inquires into the reason why any should stay behind, and he concludes, that the society and company of the Babylonians, had cooled their devotions unto God's service. They had been seventy years in Babylon, and having so long mingled themselves with the people of the nations, they were now cooled to the service of God. And indeed what is the reason that many are so cooled, over what they have been, unto what is good, but because they have mingled themselves with evil company?

As evil company will quench and cool your affections unto what is good, so they will insensibly infect you with what is evil. You see how it is with diseases, though a man have an infectious disease, yet if I keep at a distance from his breath, and the like, I am not infected therewith; but if I come near him, to suck in his breath, then I am infected.† So here, though evil, wicked men are very infectious, yet if I keep at a distance, I shall not be infected with them; but if I come so near, as to suck in their breath by keeping them company, then I am infected by them. "A little leaven (saith the

* Ideo pietatis amor et religionis studium refrigerati.—Pet. Mar. in Judg. i.

† Et solent vitia alibi connata in propinqua membra perniciem suam efflare, sic improborum vitia in eos derivantur, qui cum illis vitæ habent consuetudinem. Tertul. advers. Voelnt.

apostle) leaveneth the whole lump." And he speaks of persons; though you think there is but a little leaven of malice in such or such a man's company, yet it is leaven, and a little of that leaven will leaven all the lump. Who would have thought that Alexander should be infected with the fashions of the Persians whom he conquered; yet by conversing with them, he was infected by them, say histories. Were not the Jews infected with the superstition of Egypt, by their conversing with them? Had not Joseph learned to swear by the life of Pharaoh, by being in his house? Was not Peter infected in the high priest's hall, by his converse with them? Did not Isaiah cry out, "Wo is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips; for I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." It may be you think that they shall not infect you with their principles or their practices. But they do insensibly infect. Evil company doth insensibly infect a man with evil. You see how it is with a white loaf that is set into the oven, and doth stand near the brown bread, it comes out with a black patch on the side thereof. And ye have heard what he said that went thrice to Rome; the first time, said he, I saw your fashions and manners; the second time, I learned them; and the third time, I brought them away.* So the first time you go into evil company, you see their fashions, and hear their words; the second time ye learn them; and the third time you bring them away. And will you say, No, I have been often in such company, yet I have not brought their fashions and manners away? Then remember what the apostle saith, "Evil communications doth corrupt good manners." And have you not brought a black patch away with you? It may be others see it, though you yourself do not; I believe the word of God rather than your word, "Evil communications doth corrupt good manners." It will infect your judgment before you are aware, and your practice before you are aware, for evil company is infecting company. And,

As they do insensibly infect a man with what is evil, so they do, by your company with them, draw you into the fellowship and communion of Satan. For there are two great princes in the world, Christ and the devil; and Christ ruleth

* Qui semel it Romam, videre scelestum; qui secundo, cognoscere, qui tertio, in patriam referre.—Cluxeri Histor. mundi Epist. p. 687.

in the children of obedience, and those that have communion with them, have thereby communion with Christ; so Satan ruleth in the children of disobedience, and those that have fellowship and communion with them, have thereby communion with Satan. For how can a man have communion with the members, and not with the head? Now is it not a great evil and mischief to have communion and fellowship with Satan? This you have that keep company with wicked men.

And if you have communion with Satan and his members here, then you shall have communion with him and his members hereafter. There is a draught of things to come in this life. Those that stand at the right-hand of Christ here, shall stand at his right-hand in the day of judgment; and those that stand on his left-hand here, shall stand at his left-hand at the day of judgment. So those that are bound up with the wicked here, shall be bound up with them hereafter. There is a bundle of life, and there is a bundle of death. Some men there are that shall be bound up in the bundle of life, and some men there are that shall be bound up in the bundle of death. "Take them and bind them hands and feet, and cast them into outward darkness," saith Christ. Here is a company of drunkards, bind them together, and cast them into hell for ever. Here is a company of swearers, and there a company of opposers and jeerers, and there a company of unclean persons, and there a company of mere moral, civil men; take them and bind them up as so many faggots, and cast them into that fire that shall never be quenched. And I pray tell me, who do you think shall be bound up with these; shall not those that bundle up themselves with them now, that keep company with them now? "Come out of her, my people, (saith Christ,) lest you partake with her in her plagues." They that will partake with wicked men in their company now, shall partake with them in their plagues hereafter. And,

For the present, what shall you get by all your wicked company, but a reproach and a blot that shall not be wiped off. Doth not the mingling of the water with the wine alter the colour of the wine? so shall your mingling with evil company do; it shall not only abate of your strength unto what is good, but it shall alter the colour of your profession. Solomon says, It shall be a snare unto you. Prov. xxii. 24,

25, "Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare unto thy soul." What will not a wicked man think of himself when you that are godly shall keep company with him; will not he say, If my condition were not good, and if I were not godly, this man or woman would not keep company with me? Thus you harden and offend him by your company with him; and who among the saints is not offended at your walking and conversing and keeping company with such men. Now is it nothing in your eye to offend the generation of the righteous and the unrighteous too? Yet this do you do, that are professors of the gospel, by your company with those that are evil. Yet this is not all; but as you offend the godly and the wicked, so you offend God himself: for the more you converse with wicked men, the less you converse with God and God with you; the more you turn in to them, the more God will turn from you; the more society you have with the world, the less acquaintance you shall have with God. God is offended in a way of anger, the saints in a way of grief, and the wicked in a way of stumbling by your keeping company with them. Oh, what an evil thing, therefore, is it to keep company with those that are bad. And thus ye see the mischief of evil company. Now if there is so much benefit in good company, and so much mischief in evil company, then it is and must be best for every good man to keep good company. But as ye have heard there is much benefit in good company and much mischief in bad company, surely, therefore, it is best for every good man to keep good company. It is his duty to do so. He can do no other but do it. And it is best for him to do so. Therefore a good man will have good company.

But though a good man will have good company; yet, whether is it not lawful in some case to keep evil company?

Ye have heard, and seen, and read what the Scripture saith in this case: and the Scripture only is the rule of lawful and unlawful things. And pray do but mark what stress the Scripture lays upon this prohibition, and how it loads it with variety of expressions. Will ye instance in the persons of ungodly men, then it forbids your company with ungodly sinners and scorners, Psalm i., vain persons that have no good, but are merely vain, dissemblers, evil and wicked doers. "I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with

dissemblers. I hate the congregation of evil doers and I will not sit with the wicked." Psa. xxvi. 4, 5. And what can be said more to delineate and characterise the persons themselves, whose company you are to avoid. Or will ye instance in the actions of keeping company? Mark how the Scripture loads this prohibition in that respect. Here the psalmist saith, "I have not sat with them, neither will I go in with them." If they go into an ale-house, or elsewhere, "I will not go in with them, I will not sit with them," neither will I go in with them. And in Psalm i., there are three terms, standing, sitting, and walking. "Blessed is the man that standeth not, sitteth not, walketh not with them." And in Prov. iv., there are no less than four expressions put together upon this prohibition in one verse; at verse 14, he saith, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men;" verse 15., "avoid it:" there is one expression; "pass by it," there is another; "turn from it," there is another; and "pass away," there is another. Now if you will break through this hedge of expressions with some distinctions, take heed how you distinguish over and against the letter of the Scripture that is so full, lest a serpent bite you.

Why, but may I not then converse or be with relations, husband, wife, child, or kindred, if they be ungodly?

Yes, for says Paul, "If the unbelieving husband will not depart, let him not depart;" but you must remember what I said in the beginning, that company is a matter of choice, and not of necessity; and if you shall rather keep company with your carnal, jeering and opposing kindred, than your spiritual kindred, then it is not your kindred, but the carnality of your kindred that you keep company with.

Why, but if it be unlawful for a professor of the gospel to keep bad company; whether may it stand with grace so to do? Suppose I do keep bad company, and suppose it be unlawful so to do; whether is it such an evil as cannot stand with grace?

I answer, that it is in this sin as in all other sins: now says the apostle, "He that is born of God sinneth not;" that is, he doth not so lie in his sin, but he purgeth it out; "For he that hath this hope, (saith he) purgeth himself," else he were of the devil, saith he, who sins, and does not purge out his sin, but as the fountain or spring purgeth out the dirt that

doth fall into it; so "he that is born of God sinneth not," but he doth purge it out: and so in this case, as a good man may fall into another sin, so he may fall into this sin of evil company; but if a professor be convinced of the evil of it, and doth not leave his evil company, and purge himself from it, then he is not born of God; thus it can no more stand with grace, than another sin.

Why, but if it be unlawful to keep evil company, and it be our duty to keep good company, yea, to keep company with all those that do fear the Lord; then, whether is it lawful to keep company with erroneous persons? For David saith here, "I am a companion of all those that do fear thee." Now so it is, that some that fear God have fallen into errors; whether may I therefore keep company with them? for answer.

It is ordinarily said, that a man must consider his own weakness, and their strength that are erroneous: if I will mingle a spoonful of wine with a pailful of water, shall I not lose the wine? For so say some, If I am but weak in knowledge, and will go and mingle myself with them that are strong in errors, what shall I do but lose my own knowledge? But there are two or three things that I shall speak to in this case of conscience.

Ye must know that there are some errors that are less; some that are so gross, that do manifest a wicked state and condition in them that hold them: they are called "errors of the wicked," 2 Pet. iii. 17. Now though I may sometimes converse with those that are less erroneous; yet if their errors be such, as cannot stand with grace, the gospel, or the power of godliness, then I am to shun their company, as much as the company of a drunkard, swearer, or unclean person. But,

You must observe all this verse, the Psalmist doth not barely say, "I am a companion of all that fear thee," but he explains who those are that do fear the Lord, and such as keep his precepts; now men that depart from his ordinances do not keep his precepts; and therefore though in regard of their other profession, they may seem to fear the Lord, yet if they do not keep his precepts, this scripture doth not warrant me to be their companion. And,

You know and must remember what the apostle saith, "If

any one that is called a brother, does walk inordinately, from such turn away and avoid them." So that though I must keep company with those that fear the Lord, while they stand right, yet if they do not stand right, but do walk disorderly, then I am commanded by another scripture to avoid them for a while, that they may be ashamed. And thus now I have answered to those several cases of conscience, and have cleared the doctrine.

Now by way of application, if a good man will keep good company, then what shall we think of those that never kept good company all their days, twenty, thirty, forty years old, yet never kept good company. It may be they have kept company with civil, moral men; but, saith David, "I am a companion of those that fear thee, and do keep thy precepts." Or it may be they have sometimes occasionally fallen into good society, but they have not chosen the company of such as do fear the Lord, and keep his precepts. Now if a good man will keep good company, what shall we think of those that never kept good company all their time? Yea, what shall we think of those that have kept, and do keep bad company? Every man is as his company is. The heathen could say, *Noscitur ex comite qui non cognoscitur ex se*, He is known by his company that cannot be known by himself. A man's company is a commentary upon his life, thereby you may understand a man though he be never so close and mystical. It is recorded of Augustus Cæsar, that he came thus to know his daughters' inclinations; for being once at a public show, where much people were present, he observed that the grave senators talked with Livia, but loose youngsters and riotous persons with Julia; whereupon he concluded, that the one was grave, and the other light and vain. And if you look into Ps. 1., ye shall find that God doth conclude a man to be a wicked man, by his converse and partaking with those that are wicked, verse 16, "But to the wicked, God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" Dost thou come to the ordinance, and dost thou speak of the covenant of grace? These do not belong to thee. Why? For thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee; for when thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with the adul-

terers. Oh, what a sad condition therefore are all those in that do keep bad company; God looks upon them as wicked, that do keep company with the wicked.

Why, but is it not better to keep bad company than none; it is not good for man to be alone, that is uncomfortable, is it not therefore better to have bad company than none?

No. For suppose you were to go a journey, whether would you choose to ride alone, or in the company of thieves? Would you not rather choose to ride alone, though it be uncomfortable, than in the company of thieves? Surely ye would. Why, such are all wicked company. *Amici temporis fures*, Friends are thieves of time, especially wicked friends; for they will not only rob you of your precious time, but of your precious duties, principles, and graces. Or, I pray, tell me which is worst, sin or sorrow? Possibly it may be your affliction and sorrow to walk alone, but to keep bad company is your sin and guilt.

Why, but are they all alike guilty that do keep bad company?

No. For there are three sorts of men that do or may possibly keep bad company. Some are wicked themselves, some are professors, and some members of churches. It is ill for a wicked man to keep bad company, it is worse for a professor of the gospel, but it is worst of all for a member of a church.

It is ill for any man to keep evil company, it is ill for a wicked man himself to do it; for the more companions that a man hath in his wickedness, the more he is enclosed therein, and the harder it is for him to break away from his wickedness. Is it not a hard thing for a bird to fly away that is taken in the lime-twigs? Why, evil company is the devil's lime-twigs; and what is the reason that many a man doth continue in his sin, who is convinced of the evil of it, but because he is held fast in the bands of his wicked company. Oh, saith one, I confess it is my duty to live otherwise, but I cannot get away from my company. So that though a man be a wicked man himself, it is an evil thing for him to keep bad company. But,

As it is an evil thing for a wicked man to keep bad company, so it is worsen for a professor of the gospel to do it. *Peccatum majus*. The more repugnancy there is between

the sin and the sinner, the worser and the greater is the sin. Now a professor of the gospel is such an one as hath dedicated himself unto God, and separated himself from the world; and therefore for him to keep ill company, is directly contrary unto his profession; the more that any man sins against his knowledge and conscience, the greater is his sin; such a sin is called rebellion. 1 Sam. xv., "And rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." Now what professor is there of the gospel, but doth know that he ought to avoid evil company? Possibly a poor, ignorant, profane man, may not know his duty in this case, but a professor knows his duty; and therefore as it is evil in any man to keep bad company, so it is worser for a professor of the gospel to do it. But,

It is worst of all in a member of a church, for he sins against his present remedy. Sins against remedy are the worst sort of sins. It is a grievous sin for any young unmarried man to commit fornication; but if a man be married and doth commit adultery, he sins worse. Why? Because he sins against remedy, and because he hath a remedy by him. So here, it is ill for any man to keep ill company, but worst for a member of a church. Why? Because he sins against a remedy: he hath communion with the saints, he hath good company by him, a remedy by him, and therefore for him to keep bad company is the worst of all; the more any man despises the ways and ordinances of God by his sin, the greater is his sin. Now if you look into Scripture ye shall find, that when a man hath two things before him, and doth choose the one, and refuse the other, look what that is that he leaveth, that he is said to hate and despise. Now a member of a church hath two sorts of companies before him, and therefore if he shall choose to walk with those that are evil, he is said in scripture language to hate and despise the company of the saints, and is it a small thing in your eyes to hate or despise the company and communion of the saints?

Why, but though I do keep company sometimes with those that are wicked, yet I do not despise or hate the company of the saints, for I keep company with them too.

That is strange; strange in regard of yourself, strange in regard of others. Strange in regard of yourself; for if you find any savour in good company, is it not strange that you should not refrain bad company? surely good company will

either eat out the heart of your bad company, or bad company will eat out the savour of your good company. Strange, therefore, it is, if you should keep both companies; strange in regard of yourself, and strange also it is in regard of others. When the deer is shot, the rest of that herd will push him out from amongst them; and if you be shot with the arrow of bad company, it is strange that the rest of your herd should not push you out of their society, and avoid you, because you will not avoid others. But,

Again, You say that you keep company with the good too, but I pray tell me, is it not the mud of the good company that you converse withal? As in a river or pond there is water and mud, so in all good company there is the water of life and there is the mud of their infirmities and vanities; if it be the mud of good company that you converse with, then do you keep bad company, even whilst you converse with those that are good. But,

Again, You say you keep company with both good and bad, bad and good. But who art thou that dost so? I read in the Old Testament, that those creatures which live both in the land and in the water, were counted unclean. I read, also, in Scripture, of a sincere christian and a lukewarm professor; and what is lukewarm water, but that water which hath both heat and cold in some equal degrees; and what is the lukewarm professor, but one that can run with both, and comply with both companies? I read, in Hosea vii., that God compared the declining people of Israel unto a cake dough-baked, baked on the one side and not on the other. Why? But because they were for God and idols too: they could walk and converse with both. So now, when men are for both companies, they can stand with the saints and they can stand with sinners, they can sit with the scornful and they can sit with the faithful, they can go in and out with God's people, and they can go in and out with the wicked. What doth this argue, but that they are dough-baked, and lukewarm professors!

Yet, if there be any such amongst us, which God forbid, give me leave to speak three or four words unto them. You say you can walk with both good and bad; but what comfort can you have in walking at all with those that are bad? Mr. Dod said once, There are two questions, which if a man can

rightly answer he may have comfort in every condition: the first question is, What am I? the second question is, Where am I? If, said he, in answer to the first, What am I? I can truly say, I am godly, I am in Christ, I am one of those that fear the Lord in truth: and if in answer to the second, Where am I? I can say, I am in my calling, I am on God's ground, I am where God would have me be: then I may have comfort in every condition. But if you that are professors of the gospel be in company with the wicked, can you say, I am where God would have me be, I am on God's ground; surely no. What comfort, therefore, can you have in walking with such company at all? But, again, do you not know that wicked company lie in wait for your halting, and desire your falling. Mark what David saith, Psalm xli. 6, "And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity, his heart gathereth iniquity to itself, and when he goeth abroad he telleth it." And mark what his son Solomon saith, Prov. iv. 14, 15, 16, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, avoid it, pass not by it." Why? "For they sleep not, unless they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall." It may be you think they love your person, but do they not hate your way more than they love your person; and will you walk with them that hate your way, because you think they love your person? Be not deceived. Do you not know, again, that in time of danger they will thrust you into danger, that they may save themselves out of danger. There was a correspondency between good Jehoshaphat and wicked Ahab; and when they went into the field, what did Ahab say to Jehoshaphat? read what he said and did, 2 Chron. xviii. 29: "I will disguise myself, and will go to the battle, but put thou on thy robes." But see the issue of it at verse 31. Plainly shewing thus much, that if a good man hold correspondency with a wicked man, in case there be any danger, the wicked will thrust the good man into danger to keep himself out. But, in the last place, if you have not considered this scripture before, yet have you not thought on that scripture, "As for those that turn aside by crooked paths, the Lord will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity?" Now is not this a crooked path, to walk with both companies, with the godly in the light and with the wicked in the dark. Well, woe be to him that doth so, God

will in due time discover him, and lead him forth with the workers of iniquity. Oh what an evil thing, therefore, is it to halt between two, to walk and keep company with both good and bad, bad and good.

Why, but I praise God, will some say, I do not keep company with the wicked at all, so as to walk and converse with them ordinarily in a way of friendship.

That is well ; but what if God will count vain company in the number of bad company ? for ye have it, Ps. xxvi. 4. Again, What if God will account those for your companions, whom you would be with, if you were not restrained by the fear and shame of your friends ? We find in Scripture that a man is said to do all that which he would do if he were not restrained. Abraham is said to sacrifice his son, because he would have done it, if God not restrained him. For look what that company is, that I would be with if I were not restrained, that company, according to Scripture, I am said to keep. Again, What if God will account all those for your companions, whom you justify, like, or consent unto in the way of your sin and vanity ? so ye read, Ps. l. 20. Or what if God will account your companions according to your servants of choice, as David said, that he would not know a wicked person. Mark how he proves it, he saith, " A forward heart shall depart from me, I will not know a wicked person," Ps. ci. 4. But says he, ver. 6, " Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me ; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me ; he that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house, and he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight," ver. 7. It is ordinarily said, *Servi sunt humiles amici*, Your servants are the lowest friends ; and though a man's servants are not properly his companions, yet his companions may be known by his servants of choice. Possibly a man cannot get a godly servant, but if a man have godly and ungodly before him, and shall choose such as are vain or wicked, this argues what his company would be, if he had his choice and his mind. Now God can turn up all our leaves, and see what grows under them. And if all these things be true, how few are there that will stand free from wicked and ungodly company. But, my beloved, either there is comfort enough to be found in good company, or there is not : if there be not enough in

good company, why should you converse with them at all; and if there be comfort enough in those that are good, why should you not walk with them altogether?

But what shall we then do, that we may avoid evil company, that we may choose good company, and improve them?

Here are three questions; I shall speak something unto them distinctly. Do you ask, What you shall do that you may avoid evil company? You must be sure to mortify your affection, inclination, and disposition to the vanity thereof; it is not the persuasions of evil company that doth lead you to them, but it is your own disposition and unmortified affections: you think it may be, that it is their spark that doth set you a fire, but it is your tinder that doth close with their spark; if there were but water thrown on your own tinder, you could not be so fired with your evil company. "The woman that thou gavest me, (said Adam,) did give me to eat," and so I was drawn into this sin; but it was his own disposition that did lead him to it. It is in this sin, as in all other outward sins, it is not the drink or wine that is in fault, but a man's own drunken disposition that doth lead him to drunkenness; it is not the beautiful object that is in fault, but a man's own wanton disposition that doth lead him into uncleanness: so here, it is not your company, but your own disposition that doth lead you into it. Would you, therefore, avoid and abstain from your wanton company, then labour to mortify your own wanton affections; would you abstain from and avoid your vain company, then must you first labour to mortify the vanity of your own heart and spirit, otherwise though you abstain from your company for a time, yet you will return again. Therefore mortify your own lusts and earthly affections.

And again, Be sure that you avoid all those occasions, which though lawful in themselves, yet through your weakness may any way open a door unto evil company. When the Nazarites were forbidden wine, they were forbidden grapes also, whereof wine was made. Numb. vi. 3. And if ye look again into Prov. iv., you shall find, that when the Holy Ghost by Solomon doth forbid you to "enter into the path of the wicked, and going in the way of evil men;" he doth in the name of God command you to "avoid it, not to pass by it, to turn from it, and to pass away," ver. 15; as if, says Mr.

Greenham, a physician should give directions to a man to avoid the plague; the great receipt, saith he, that the physician gives against the plague, is made of three ingredients, *cito, longe, tarde*; fly quickly, remove far from the place, and return slowly: so here, saith he, as if there were a plague in evil company, the Holy Ghost bids us to depart quickly, and not to come near. And what is the reason that many are so overtaken with evil company, but because they do not avoid all those lawful occasions, which through their own weakness doth lead them into it. Be sure, therefore, that you avoid them.

And if you would avoid evil company, then you must part abruptly with them, you think thus it may be, though I part with my evil company, yet I will part civilly with them, I will go but once more; and again, I will go but once more to them, and will part fairly, with them. Whereas our Saviour Christ saith, "If thy right eye offend thee, pull it out, and if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." Look what that is, that is near and dear to you, that must you part with in a way of violence; if you will part fairly with your company, then go them and say, Well I have sinned, and sinned greatly in keeping your company, now God through grace hath convinced me of it, I will never come in your company in any such way again; and he that will part with wicked company must be abrupt in his parting with them.

If you would avoid and part with your evil company, then you must humble yourself before the Lord, for all the vanity and folly of your company-keeping; some men being convinced of their sin in company-keeping, do resolve never to come in such company again: and it may be they do refrain for three or four weeks, but in a short time they are where they were. And what is the reason, that though men be convinced of their sin, yet they return again, but because they go forth in the strength of their own resolutions, and were never thoroughly humbled for their sin? Would you therefore so refrain from evil company, that you may return no more; then go and humble yourself before the Lord for the evil of it.

And be sure that you do not follow the saints to that is good for their multitude: for he that follows the multitude to good, because they are many, will also follow the multi-

tude, unto what is evil. Saith Austin,* We must not do a good thing because many do it, but because it is good; if others do that which is good, saith he, I will rejoice because they do it, but I will not do it because they do it that-I may do good; or, to do well few shall suffice; yea, one; yea, none. The way to follow the multitude to evil is to follow the multitude to good; because of this multitude take heed therefore of that.

And if you would avoid evil company, then be sure that you keep good company, and improve them. *Intus existens prohibet alienum.* It the vessel be full of wine, it keeps out air and water; good thoughts keep out bad thoughts, good words keep out bad words, and good company keeps out bad company. And what is the reason that many poor souls are led away with naughty and debauched company, but because they are not hedged in with good company, for as bad company keeps men from good company, so good company will keep men from bad company. Look what day or time that is wherein you depart from good, then are you exposed unto them that are evil; yet it is not enough to have good company, but you must improve also, and gain by them; for if you be in good company, and do get nothing by them, you will say, What need I make such a stir about my company, I see no difference; as one company talks of the world, so doth the other also; and as I get nothing by the one, so I get nothing by the other also; therefore I will return unto my old company again. Would you therefore avoid evil company, then be sure that you keep good company and improve them.

Why, but I do not know how to choose good company; I confess good company is a great mercy, and bad company is a great misery, but how shall I be able to choose my company.

You must go to God and beseech him for to choose your company for you. Mark what David said and did; in this scripture he saith, "I am a companion of all those that do fear the Lord;" yet, versé 79, he goes to God, and prayeth, saying, "Let those that fear thee, O Lord, turn unto me,

* Non faciendum, quia multi faciunt sed quia bonum ut bonum faciunt, aut bene satis mihi sunt pauci, satis unus, satis nullus.—Augustin.

Si potentiores faciunt, non faciam quia faciunt, sed gaudeo quia faciunt.

and those that have known thy testimonies." As if he should say, Of a truth, Lord, I am a companion of all that do fear thee; but it is not in my power to bend their hearts unto me; the hearts of all men are in thy hands, now therefore "let those that fear thee turn unto me." So do you go to God, and say likewise, Lord, do thou choose my company for me, let those that fear thee turn in unto me: oh, do thou bow and incline their hearts to be my companion.

If you would act herein under God, and make a right choice of your company, then must you get your nature changed. The ravens keep company with the ravens, and not with the pigeons: but if the nature of the raven were changed into the nature of a pigeon, it would flock together with the pigeons. Every thing follows its nature. Labour therefore to get your nature changed; and then though you have flown with the ravens, you will flock together with God's doves.

And if you would make a right choice of your company, then you must get a discerning spirit, that you may be able to put a difference between those that fear the Lord, and those that fear him not; between those that are civil moral men, and those that are gracious. "The spiritual man judgeth all things." And what is the reason that people keep no better company, but because they cannot discern of company; and what is the reason that they discern not between company and company, but because they are not spiritual? Would ye therefore be able to make a right choice of your company? then get this discerning spirit.

And observe who those are that are most profitable in your society; who those are that are most sound in their faith, savoury in their spirits, and most communicative and profitable in their lives, and with such close; some have knowledge enough to discourse with, but they have no savour in their spirits; some are of a savoury spirit, but they want knowledge, and are not communicative; but let those "that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies," saith David; as if he should say, Lord, I would not only have knowing men to be my companions, but fearing men. Neither would I only keep company with "those that fear thee," but with such as are knowing, and do "know thy

testimonies." Thus let his choice be yours, a knowing man, and a fearing man, a fearing man, and a knowing man, will make a meet companion for you.

And if you would make a good and comfortable choice of your company, then in case you be a man, let the friend of your bosom be a man, and not a woman, unless it be your wife; and if you be a woman, then let the friend of your bosom be a woman, and not a man, unless it be your husband; for if the special friendship be between a man and a woman, who knows how soon the spiritual friendship may degenerate into carnal affection; and if it may be, let your friend or companion stand upon even ground and a level with you; for the German proverb is often true, He that will eat cherries with noblemen, shall have his eyes spirt out with the stones thereof. Therefore affect not company too high for you. But whatever degree your company be of, be sure that it be not such as will be apt to take an offence from you, nor such as you shall be apt to take an offence from; for then your society will always be uncomfortable. Thus do, and your choice shall be right.

Well, but suppose I have chosen good company, and I can say in truth with David here, "I am a companion of all those that do fear thee, and do keep thy precepts;" what shall I do, that I may improve my company? I praise God I have good company, but I do not know how to improve them; what shall I therefore do that I may improve my good company?

You must be humbled for all the mispence of your time with good company. The way to improve a mercy is to be humbled for our not improvement of it.

If you would improve your good company, then lay your right ends together when you meet; you see how it is with a fire that is half burned, if you would mend it, you take the sticks and lay them together; but then you do not lay the cold ends together, but the hot ends together. Now there is no company so good, but hath its cold ends, and its warm ends; if ye lay your cold ends together when ye meet, what heat, what warmth, what good or improvement can you expect? Therefore lay your warm ends together when you meet together.

Observe what that grace is wherein your companions doth

excel, and labour more and more for to draw that forth, every saint and goodly man doth not excel in every grace. *Non omnis fert omnia tellus*, Every ground will not bear wheat or rye, but some one grain, and some another; so every christian doth not excel in every grace, some in one grace, and some in another: it may be he hath life, and you have light; or it may be he hath light, and you have life; and why hath he given this to the one, and that to the other, but that they may be beholden one to another, and have communion one with another? Would ye therefore improve your commnion and good company, then observe what that grace is wherein he doth most excel, and labour more and more to draw out the same.

Take heed also of pride and envy, which is the bane of all good company: pride will make a man speak, and pride will make a man hold his peace. I am a poor ignorant man or woman, saith one, and therefore I will not speak of that which is good before their company; yet this may be out of pride; I have an opportunity of doing good in this company, saith another, and therefore I will speak, yet that may be out of pride too. There was such an one spake good words at such a time, saith another, but it was little to the purpose, and that may be out of envy: now envy is between equals, and pride between unequals; either therefore you converse with your equals, or with your unequals; if with your equals, take heed of envy; if with your unequals take heed of pride.

And if you would improve your good company, and profit by them, then pray over them, and for them. Of all companies, says Mr. Greenham, I never profited and gained more by any, than by that that I prayed most for; and what is the reason that you profit no more by your good company, but because you pray no more for them, and over them. You will pray over your hearing, reading or meditation; why? because it is an ordinance: so is this of good company too. And therefore if you would improve and profit by your company, then pray much over them, and for them; yet

Do not rest secure in your good company: for though you be in a good company you may possibly get more hurt than if you had been in bad company. And what is the reason that you come sometimes from bad company into which you

have been cast occasionally, or against your will, with your soul troubled for their sin, and through God's providence do get good thereby: and you come from good company with your heart flat, and dead and dull, but because you rest secure in your good company? In the one you watch, in the other not. Wherefore rest not secure in your company, though it be never so good. Good company is God's ordinance, but it is an ordinance that doth tend unto other ordinances: some ordinances tend unto other ordinances. It is an ordinance that we should rest on the Sabbath-day. But why are we to rest then; for rest sake? No, but we are to rest in order to the positive sanctification of the Sabbath; so we are to keep good company, but why; what for itself? No, but in order to other duties. Now if it be an ordinance that lies in order to other ordinances, why should we rest in it? The more you rest in it, the less you will improve it. Therefore do not rest secure in your company, although it be never so good. Be sure that you look upon it as a duty in order to other duties; and thus you shall improve it. Which that you may do,

Consider with yourself what a great talent is put into your hand, when you are betruſted with good company; thereby you have an opportunity of gaining ſomething which you cannot gain by your public miniſtry. You ſee how it is with the candle; I can take a candle in my hand, and go down into the cellar, and ſee that thereby which I cannot ſee by the light of the ſun; poſſibly the ſunbeams may not reach that which the beams of the candle may reach; ſo poſſibly the light and beams of private communion may reach that truth which the beams of the public miniſtry doth not reach. It is poſſible that a miniſter may ſpeak to a truth in public, yet he may leave it in the dark; when I come at home, then I may beat it out more fully with good company. So that this ordinance of good company is a great talent; and will the Lord require an account of the improvement of our talents, then ſurely he will have an account of the improvement of our company. In Mal. iii. it is ſaid, "Then thoſe that feared the Lord ſpake often, and a book of remembrance was written." God hath a table-book at work upon all our ſpeeches and conferences when we meet together, and he ſets down what we ſay and what we do when we meet together;

and shall we not, then, take heed what company we come in, and what we do and speak in our company? It is recorded of Mr. Latimer, the martyr, that though he was somewhat free in his speech when he was examined, yet when he heard a pen writing behind the curtain, then he was more wary. Why, believe it, there is a pen behind the curtain that sets down what you do and say in your company, whether good or bad. Now, therefore, as ever you do desire that God's own hand-writing, that God's own table-book may not be brought out against you, take heed what company you come into, and what you do and speak in your company. Thus shall you be able to avoid bad company, to choose good, and to improve the same. And thus I have done with these arguments of good company. A good man will have good company: "For I am a companion (says David) of all them that fear thee, and do keep thy precepts."

SERMON V.

THE CARNALITY OF PROFESSORS.

"For ye are carnal."—1 COR. III. 3.

IN this chapter the apostle Paul doth charge the Corinthians with carnality, which charge he maketh good by divers arguments. The first is taken from their incapacity of receiving and digesting the strongest truths of the gospel: verses 1, 2, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, &c. For ye are carnal." The second argument is taken from the envyings, strifes and divisions that were amongst them: verse 3, "For whereas there are among you, &c., are ye not carnal?" The third argument is taken from those sects that were amongst them: verse 4, "For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" They set up one minister against another, crying up of one that they might cry down another, and so put themselves into sects; this was carnality. And upon this account he saith to them, again and again, "Are ye not carnal?" Where then observe thus much, that it is possible for

great professors of the gospel to be very carnal. These Corinthians were a church of Christ, and of all the churches they had the greatest gifts; and the apostle writing to them, calleth them "saints, sanctified in Christ Jesus," chap. i. 2. Yet here he saith they were carnal. Possibly, then, a man may be a member of a true church, have great gifts, and be a good man too, yet he may be very carnal; surely he that is a member of a church, greatly gifted, and a good man, is a great professor; this a man may be, and yet carnal. Possibly then a man or woman may be a great professor, and yet may be very carnal. Great professors may be very carnal. And if you ask what this carnality is, or when a man may be said to be carnal? I answer, in the general, that you may know what this means by the opposition and the application of it. It is applied sometimes to the unregenerate: John iii. 6, "That which is born after the flesh is flesh," or carnal; so it is not used here, for the apostle doth not charge the Corinthians with an unregenerate estate. Sometimes this word, carnal, therefore, is applied to the regenerate, such as are weaklings, babes and sucklings in religion, who have more sin than grace, more flesh than spirit; and so he speaketh of these Corinthians. But the word, carnal, is used also by way of opposition, and it is opposed sometimes unto what is mighty: so in 1 Cor. x. 4, "Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty." And sometimes it is opposed unto what is spiritual, so Rom. xv. 27; vii. 14. Look, therefore, when a man's fleshly weaknesses do so far prevail, that he is not spiritual in his life and conversation as he should be, then he is said to be carnal, according to this scripture. Now thus it is possible that a member of a church, a gifted person, yea, good men may be very carnal. Possibly great professors may be very carnal. In prosecuting whereof we must inquire,

First, How it may appear that great professors of the gospel may be carnal.

Secondly, How far that carnality may reach or extend.

Thirdly, What is the difference between the carnality of the world and such as are good.

Fourthly, What an evil thing it is for a professor of the gospel to be carnal.

Fifthly, How we may be freed from this carnality and be more spiritual.

And if you ask,

How may it then appear that great professors may be very carnal?

I answer, The more any man's judgment is defiled and dabbled with corrupt opinions, contrary to the grace of the gospel, the more carnal he is, especially if he father them on the Spirit, or on the gospel, for the gospel is the ministration of the Spirit. "The words that I speak (saith Christ) are spirit and life." Now two sorts of doctrines there are that are contrary to the gospel; the doctrine of natural free-will, and the doctrine of legal and Jewish ordinances. The doctrine of natural free-will is contrary to the substance of the gospel, which is the word of grace. The doctrine of legal and Jewish ordinances is contrary to the dispensation of the gospel, and both carnal. The doctrine of natural free-will is a carnal doctrine, for saith John, chap. i. 13, "Which are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man." The will of the flesh and the will of man go together. Was it not a carnal thing for Abraham to go into his maid Hagar? So is it also a carnal thing for a professor of the gospel to turn into a covenant of works, whereof Hagar was a type. And I appeal to yourselves, saith Austin to the Pelagians, pleading for the power of nature, and for natural free-will,* What is that which makes an outward difference between one man and another? One is rich and another is poor. Doth man's will make that difference, or God's providence? Saith Austin: One man is strong, and another weak; doth man's will make the difference, or God's providence? One man or woman is fair, and another deformed; doth man's will make the difference, or God's providence? I suppose you will say that it is God's providence, not man's will that doth make the difference. And if you say that man's will makes the difference in these outward things, and not God's providence, "are ye not carnal?" how much more, if you say, man's will, and not God's grace, doth make the difference between one man and another in spiritual

* Nec tribuuntur ista meritis voluntatum, sicut sunt celeritates, vires, bonæ valetudines, et pulchritudines corporum, ingenia mirabilia, et multarum artium capaces naturæ mentium, vel quæ accidunt extrinsecus, ut est opulentia, nobilitas, honores, et cætera hujusmodi, quæ quisque ut habeat, non est nisi in Dei potestate, &c.—Aug. de correptione et gratia. cap. viii.

things? As for the doctrines of legal and Jewish ordinances, they are expressly called "carnal commands," Heb. ix. Now possibly a professor of the gospel may be baptized into these opinions, possibly he may hold the doctrine of free-will under the gospel of free grace. Possibly he may be baptized into the doctrines of Jewish, legal customs, ceremonies, and sabbaths, and of all the opinions that are now stirring and ranging abroad. What opinion is there, but the maintainers thereof do father it upon the Spirit? What brat or bastard opinion is there abroad, but men do come to lay it down at the door of the gospel, and father it upon the Spirit? Now when men do this, may we not say to them, as the apostle here, "Are ye not carnal?"

The more any professor is guilty of levity and lightness in their ways of the gospel, the more carnal he is; for says the apostle, "When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness; or things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay? But as God is true, our word towards you was not yea and nay," 2 Cor. i. 17. Levity therefore is a sign of carnality. Now there is a twofold levity: one in regard of judgment, whereby men are unsettled in their judgment, saying yea to a doctrine to-day, and nay to-morrow, or soon after. This levity of judgment is a sign of carnality. The other levity is in regard of practice, whereby men are slight, vain, and frothy in their communication. Now possibly a professor may be thus light in both these respects. Some are light in regard of their judgment, unsettled; some are light in regard of their practice, for they can sit and spend a whole afternoon in vain conferences, and not a word of God, of Christ. Are not these carnal?

If there be little or no difference sometimes between the carriage and behaviour of a professor, and of the men of the world, then possibly a professor may be very carnal. And what difference was there between David and the men of the world, in that matter of Uriah? What civil man would have done as David did? And so now, though a professor may be very good and gracious, yet if he be stirred sometimes in a business of his own concernments, what difference is there between his carriage and the carriage of the world? May we not then say to such, "Are ye not carnal?"

If there be envyings, wranglings, strifes and divisions amongst the professors of the gospel, then it is possible that great professors may be very carnal; nay, that ye read in the text, and I wish we might not read it in our daily experience. It is the property of a gracious, spiritual frame of heart, to rejoice in others' graces, and to mourn for others' sins; it is the property of a carnal heart, to envy at others' graces, and to rejoice and triumph over others' failings. Now if professors be at variance, one of one judgment, and another of another, in case a man of another judgment do fail or fall, what rejoicings will there be. If I were spiritual, then I should more grieve for God's dishonour by the fall of a professor, than rejoice at the fall of my adversary; but yet so it is, though God's name be dishonoured by his fall, because he is a professor, yet another will triumph therein, because he is his adversary. Is not this carnal?

If a professor of the gospel can neither give reproof without anger, nor take a reproof without distaste; is he not carnal? "You that are spiritual, (saith the apostle,) restore him that is fallen, with the spirit of meekness." But now if an admonition or reproof be given, either it is given with anger, or it is taken with distaste; why? but because we are carnal.

If a professor of the gospel do use carnal engines to obtain his designs, is he not carnal therein? Now thus it may be possibly with some great professors of the gospel. Abraham was a good man, and a great professor, yet when he would secure and preserve himself, he said to Sarah, "Say thou art my sister." The thing was true, and no lie, but it was a carnal engine that he then used to obtain that design. We read of Abner, that when he would bring about the kingdom to David, for his own preferment, then he went to the heads of Israel, and told them of the promise that God made to David. Here he made use of a religious engine to obtain his own carnal ends. Sometimes men use their carnal engines to obtain religious designs; sometimes they use religious engines to obtain their carnal ends: and what more ordinary than this, even amongst professors. Why? but because they are carnal.*

* Ne quis in honestas cupiditates religionis glaucomate oblegato.—Vide Cluveri Histor. Mundi p. 108.

The more selfish any man is in seeking his own particular interest in the time or cause of public concernments, the more carnal he is; a selfish principle is a carnal principle. Now this may be amongst professors. Why, says the Holy Ghost to Reuben, Judges v., "Why abidest thou amongst the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flock; and why did Dan remain in ships?" There was a great cause afoot, Zebulun and Naphtali came forth, but as for Asher they abode in the creeks, Dan in the ships, and Reuben abode among the sheepfolds to hear the bleatings, &c. That is, says Peter Martyr,* *plus pecundum balatu quam reipublicæ cura*; they were taken with their own particular interest, more than with the public concernments. Do I therefore mind my own particular interest, more than the public concernment; and in times of public concernments or calamities, do I seek to raise myself, and to get a place, a preferment, and great things in this world? then am I carnal. Yet thus, even thus it is with many professors at this day. Why? Because they are carnal. Possibly then great professors may be very carnal, and that is the first thing.

Secondly, Well, but suppose this doctrine be true; great professors may be very carnal; how far may this carnality of professors reach and extend?

It may reach and extend unto all our life, as a scurf may grow over all the body; so this carnality may grow over all the body of a man's conversation, and extend unto every part thereof.

For will you instance in our thoughts, apprehensions, reasonings, and conclusions? Is it not a carnal thing to abound with carnal reasonings? This the disciples did before Christ's ascension, therefore saith he often to them, "Why reason you so amongst yourselves?"

Or will you instance in the matter of our affections; is it not a carnal thing for a man to love and savour the things of the world? This professors may possibly do, witness the parable of the thorny ground.

Or will you instance in the matter of our words? Is it a carnal thing to bite and devour one another, and to carry

* *Habitabat Reuben ultra sordanem in pasevis videtur, que ob suas oves ut greges rei. pub. curam omisisse, eo nomine nos accusat, quod tunc sua curarint. Plus pecadum balatu quam reipub. cura capebantur.*—Pet. Mart. in Judg. 5.

tales between men. Yet this the Galatians did, "If ye bite one another, shall ye not be consumed one of another?" Gal. v. 15.

Or will ye instance in the matter of our condition? Is it not a carnal thing to be discontented with one's condition, and to think that I can carve better for myself, than God hath carved? This the Israelites did when they said, Would God we had stayed still in Egypt.

Or will ye instance in the matter of our lives, and reformation of our practice? Is it not a carnal thing for a man to run from one extreme to another? *Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currant.* Yet what more ordinary than this in the way of reformation from no liberty, to all liberty; from prodigality to covetousness?

Or will ye instance in the matter of our duties? Is it not a carnal thing for a man that hears the word of God, to apply it to another, and not to apply it to himself? Saying, that the preacher met with such an one, and not think of himself; or to be more taken with the volubility of expression, than with the spirituality of the ordinance; or if a man preach the word, is it not a carnal thing to have flings and throws at particular persons, or to preach the gospel for hire, that he may get a living thereby, or to preach Christ out of envy? Yet this the apostle says to the Philippians that some did in his days.

Or will ye instance in the matter of the enjoyments and special communion with God? Is it not a carnal thing to desire incomes from God, for the sweetness of them? The ordinance of the Lord's supper is an ordinance wherein you enjoy much of God, and have special communion with him; yet you know how the apostle blames the Corinthians for their carnality therein; and if ye look into Luke xxii. 24, you shall find that even at the Lord's supper, the disciples of Christ were debating who should be greatest; a carnal thing for any of them to desire greatness above the other, but that this question should be started then, what carnality was here?

Or will you instance in our approach unto Christ, and coming to Christ? If carnality be excluded in anything, surely it will be excluded here; yet, says the apostle, "henceforth know I no man after the flesh," no not Christ himself;

it seems that formerly they did thus know Christ himself, and were too carnal in their very knowledge of Christ, but says Christ to those that followed him, "Ye follow me not because of the miracles, but because of the loaves." Plainly then this carnality may extend and reach unto all our actions, and if there be no action that a professor can do, but this carnality may get and soak into it, then surely this doctrine is most true, that possibly a great professor may be very carnal, possibly great professors of the gospel may be very carnal; and so much for the second.

Thirdly, But you will say, If a professor may be carnal, and this carnality may possibly boil up to such a height; is there any difference then between the carnality of the world, and of the professors of the gospel?

I answer, Yes, much, if professors be godly, for all professors are not godly. For though a professing good man may labour under much carnality and be too fleshly, yet he is not born after the flesh; for, saith the apostle Paul, "Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondwoman, the other by a free-woman," Gal. iv. 22, but he who was of the bond-woman, was born after the flesh, but he of the free-woman, by the promise. Which things are an allegory, for these are the two covenants; that is, the legal covenant, and the covenant of grace. Now we, brethren, saith he, verse 28, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. We are born after the promise, the promise comes and works grace in us; we are regenerated and born again by the word of the promise; and therefore though these children of Abraham may labour under much carnality; yet they are not born after the flesh, as carnal, unregenerated men are, who are the children of the bond-woman, and belong to the legal covenant.

Though professing good men may be very carnal, yet there is a grace and goodness that doth run along there withal, for they are the smoking flax, and though there may be much smoke and carnality that may offend the eyes of beholders, yet there is a fire of grace and zeal that runs out therewithal. What a smoke did Jonah make when he ran away from God, and was froward and peevish even with God himself? But though therein he was very carnal, yet still there was a grace and goodness that did go along therewith.

Though a good man may be very carnal, yet he doth not sow to the flesh, or savour and relish the things of the flesh most. A carnal wicked man doth savour and relish the things of the flesh; thus to be carnally minded is death, saith the apostle, "And those that sow to the flesh, shall reap corruption," Rom. viii.

As for those that are carnal and wicked, it is not so with them, though a good man may be very carnal and may labour under much carnality, insomuch as his parts may be too big for his grace, and his passions may be too big for his parts, yet he doth not take up a carnal prejudice against the whole way or power of godliness; the wicked are carnal, and they are carnally prejudiced against the very power of godliness in the strictness of it. Possibly a good man may be prejudiced against this or that particular way of God; but as for the power of godliness, he is not carnally prejudiced against that.

Though a good man may be very carnal, and labour under much carnality, yet that carnality doth not bear the rule and sway in his life. *Finis actionem domina et regina.* Look what a man's general and utmost end is, that doth give a law unto all his actions, that rules, that sways, and is the yard wand unto all his actions; * as for example, if the world and profit be my end, my general and utmost end, then my actions generally are directed and swayed by it; and I must preach so much as may stand with my profit; I must go to meetings and improve soul-opportunities so far as may stand with my profit; I must acquaint myself with men so far as may stand with my profit; and if such and such things may not stand with my profit in the world, then I must not do the same. Why? Because the world is my great and utmost end, and every thing must strike sail unto it. Now, I say, though a good man may labour under much carnality, yet there is no carnal thing that doth bear sway with him as it doth in those that are carnally wicked.

Though a good man may be very carnal, yet his practical conclusions and therefore are not so carnal, as the men of the world's are. Mark what carnal therefore the men and people of the world have, Prov. vii. 14, 15, "I offered my peace offering, now therefore am I come forth to meet thee."

* *Finis dat mediis amabilitatem ordinem et mensuram.*

A strange therefore ; as if she should say : I have been at duty, and at the ordinance, and therefore now am some forth to play the whore. Ye know also what a therefore Pilate had upon the judgment of Christ, " I find no fault with him, now therefore scourge him and let him go." Oh, strange therefore ; I find no fault with him, therefore whip him ; nay therefore whip him not, for I find no fault in him. Are there not such therefore still in the hearts of men, The Lord is gracious and merciful, therefore I will go on to sin ; the Lord is patient and forbearing, therefore I will repent afterwards. But, says David, " Oh how great is thy loving kindness, therefore do the children of men put their trust in thee." Though a good man be too carnal, yet he is not so carnal in his main inferences and conclusions as the carnal world is.

Though a good man may be very carnal, yet he is very sensible of his carnality, and is much humbled ; for when I saw, said David, the prosperous estate of the wicked, then I had such carnal reasonings as these, I have cleansed my hands in vain ; but, says he, " I was a beast therein," Ps. lxxiii. 22. The more a man looks into the spirituality of the law, the more he will be sensible of his own carnality ; now a good man looks much upon that. As for the law, says Paul, " That is holy, spiritual, good, but I am carnal," Rom. vii. 14. Who was a more spiritual christian than Paul ? Yet he was sensible of his carnality. Why ? Because his eye was upon the spirituality of the law. Now so it is with all those that truly fear the Lord ; they do not stand and compare themselves with others, for that would augment their carnality ; but they compare themselves with the law and word of God, and so they are exceeding sensible of their own carnality, and are humbled for it. So that then now you see, there is a difference, and what that difference is ; and though the carnality of the good professor be not so bad as the carnality of the world and the men thereof, yet it is evil ; the best of this carnality is naught, and if you ask me

Fourthly, Wherein the evil of it doth appear ? I answer, in many things it is a very evil thing for a professor of the gospel to be carnal. For,

Is it not an evil thing for a man to walk contrary unto his

profession? *Peccatum majus ubi repugnantia major*;* is it not an evil thing for a judge to do unjustly? Yea. Why? Because it is contrary unto his profession. Now the profession of the gospel is spiritual, and the professors of the gospel are so described and called. The spiritual man judgeth all things; and ye that are spiritual, restore such an one, &c. The weapons of our warfare, saith the apostle, are not carnal. Carnal weapons are suitable to carnal profession, but spiritual weapons are suitable to spiritual profession. It is observed, therefore, that the weapons of the papists, in advancing their religion, are very carnal. Somewhat they have in their religion which doth comply with every man's carnal humour.† If a man be devotional, they have a cloister for him; if he be disputative, they have their schools for him; if a man or woman do pretend to chastity, they have their nunneries and priories for them; if a man be given to filthy wantonness, they have their allowed stews for them; if a man be given to honour and greatness, they have a cardinal's cap for him; and if he be given to despise and neglect the world, they have a mendicant friar's place for him: some carnal thing still they have that doth suit with the carnal and wicked humours of men. Why? But because their warfare is carnal, and so the weapons of their warfare are carnal. But the professed religion is spiritual and reforming: how have they, therefore, advanced their religion, but by powerful preaching, printing good books, translating the Scriptures into the vulgar tongue, catechising and instructing the younger, open disputings for the truth, and sufferings for the same: thus the reformed religion hath been carried on by good and spiritual weapons. Why? For our warfare is spiritual. Now in these times we are upon another condition of reformation, we are reforming the very reformation, and therefore the weapons of our warfare should be most spiritual. Are we therefore carnal now in these days? then do we walk contrary unto our profession.

Again, Yea, though you be a good man, yet, if you be carnal, you do thereby make yourself unfit both to do good and receive good. Carnality makes you unfit to do good, it will hinder the vend of their commodity. I think sometimes,

* *Peccatum majus ubi specialis repugnantia inter peccantem et peccatum.*—
Aquinas.

† Sir Edward Sandys Relig. West.

says Luther,* to convert all the congregation, but the auditor comes and smells something of a man in what I say, and so he turns away, and no good is done. And in experience, what good doth admonition do, when administered in passion? This carnality is an hindrance to your doing good; and as it is an hindrance to your doing, so it is an hindrance to your receiving it. It stops your ears and eyes; your ears from hearing the word, and your eyes from seeing into the dispensations of God. Yea,

Thereby you will be apt to give and to take offence. As this carnality will make you unfit to do and receive good; so it will make you apt and ready to give and to take offence. Who more apt to give and take offence than young christians? And why so? but because they are babes and carnal. Yea,

Though you may have some real goodness in you, yet if you be carnal, you may dishonour God more by your carnality, than you may honour him by your goodness. And is it not an evil thing for a man to dishonour God more by the carnality of his profession, than he can honour God by his profession?

The more carnal you are, the more you are exposed, and expose yourself to the temptations of Satan, and his instruments. It was a carnal thing for David to number the people; Satan observed this carnal affection, and the text says, That he stirred him up to number the people. And if professors have their carnal ends hanging out, what may not the devil and his agents add and join thereunto? Yea,

The more carnal you are in your profession, the more you will lose the sweetness of your christian communion. What happiness can a gracious spiritual heart take in conversing with a carnal professor? Suppose a man deal but in outward friendship, what happiness can he have in conversing with one that is selfish, that seeks himself in all his acquaintance and converse? Is there any happiness in that friendship where a man must always stand upon his guard, to keep himself from the selfish designs of him that he walks with?

* Sentit anima hominis verbum arte super se compositum esse, et stercore humano (ut apud Ezekielem est) opertum, humano affectu pollutum, ideo nauseat super illo, et potius irritatur quam convertitur.—Luther loc. com. clas. 4. de minister. verbi.

No, surely. Much more may I say in our spiritual converse and communion. What happiness, what sweetness can I take in conversing with him that is selfish and carnal? Oh, this carnality is a great enemy to the sweetness of christian communion, it will eat out all the sweetness of it. And

It will hinder the advance and progress in the ways of God, and knowledge of Christ: for what growth or advance can a people make in their practices, when ministers cannot advance them in their preachings. Now, says the apostle here, "I could not deliver to you strong meat;" why? "because ye are carnal." Wherefore says the apostle, "Would you grow in grace? then laying aside all malice and superfluity of naughtiness, as new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." How is it therefore with me; am I a professor, and yet carnal? Then do I walk contrary unto my profession; then am I thereby unfit to do good, or receive good; then am I fit to take, and to give offence; then may I dishonour God more by the carnality of my profession, than I may honour him by my profession; yea, and thereby do I expose myself to the temptations of Satan and the world; then shall I lose the sweetness of christian communion, and be kept from growth in grace. Surely therefore it is an evil thing, and very evil for the professors of the gospel to be carnal; yet this may be possibly in great professors, members of churches, and men of great parts and gifts, and a good man too may be very carnal; such were these Corinthians. Possibly therefore, a man may be a great professor, yet he may be very carnal. That is the doctrine.

Fifthly, Now if you ask, What then is our duty that doth flow from hence? I answer,

If great professors of the gospel may be very carnal, then why should any man stumble, or be offended at the ways of God and godliness, because of the carnality of professors? Will ye be offended at that which ye know must and shall come to pass? "These things have I told you before, (saith Christ) that when they come to pass, you may not be offended." Now he hath told us beforehand, "That in the last days the kingdom of heaven is like to ten virgins waiting for the coming of the bridegroom, and they all sleep;" that is, there shall be a general scurf and carnality grow upon the

face of all profession. And now ye know these things, will ye be offended? Or will ye be offended if your own offence will be your own ruin? "Woe to the world, (saith Christ) because of offences; offences must come, and woe to him through whom they come." Here is a woe and a woe; a woe to the offender, and a woe to the offended. "Woe to the world," why? Because their offence will be their own ruin. And whoever you are that are apt to be offended at these things, either the lives of professors is the rule by which you walk, or the Scripture. If the lives of professors be the rule of your life then why do you not live as they do; as the best of them do? Why are you not rather convinced by their goodness, than stumbled by their carnality? And if Scripture be your rule, why then do you not say in the midst of all these carnalities, Well, yet the Scripture is the Scripture, and godliness is godliness; and therefore though all men have their failings, and the fairest face hath its wart, and there is none so spiritual, but hath some carnality, "yet I and my house will serve the Lord;" for I walk by Scripture, and Scripture is Scripture still, and godliness is godliness still. Oh, take heed and be not offended.

If great professors of the gospel may be carnal, then why should we not all take heed of their carnality? Possibly a member of the church may be carnal, and shall not we then take heed of carnality? Possibly a man of parts, and gifts, and graces too may be carnal, and very carnal, and shall not we then take heed of carnality? And in case that we have been, or are carnal in our profession, why should we not all labour to scale off this carnality?

But what shall we do herein; I confess I have been and am very carnal in my profession, what shall I therefore do that I may be rid of this carnality, and be more spiritual?

I answer, In case you have been carnal, be humbled for it; a man will never leave a sin for the time to come, unless he be humbled for the time past. Now who is there in all the congregation, but may cry, Guilty, guilty; I am the man or woman that have been carnal under my spiritual and gospel profession? Why then, go to God and humble yourself before him, in reference to the carnality of your profession.

In case you have begun a profession of Christ, be sure that you look well to your beginnings and settings out. It

is possible that a carnal beginning may make a spiritual ending; but ordinarily if men set out the wrong way at the first, they go wrong all the day after. And it is usual with men to be carnal at the entrance into their profession. *Facite me, &c.* said he, Make me Bishop of Rome, and I will be a christian: but *dimidium facti*, He that hath well begun hath done half his work. Be sure therefore that you look to your beginnings, and first settings out for godliness. And in case,

That you are a professor of some standing, then make it your work and business to go over your work again, and to refine your work. "Ye are now come to that mount, where the Lord hath given you wine upon the lees well refined." Ordinances refined, and gospel enjoyments refined. And what do these call for but a refined conversation; and how should that be, but by making it your work and business to refine all your duties? True, I have prayed many times, but now I will go and refine all my prayers. I have conversed with the saints, now I will go and refine my converses; yea, I will make it my work now to refine my works.

Whether you be of long or late standing in religion, pray much for the pourings forth of the Spirit upon you. Ye read in the gospel, that the disciples were very carnal before Christ's death; but after his ascension, then they were very spiritual. Why? Because the Holy Ghost was then fallen down upon them. Would ye be more spiritual, and less carnal, pray for the pourings out of the Holy Ghost upon your souls. And,

Take heed of a selfish spirit, especially in matters of religion; for a selfish spirit is a carnal spirit. The more plainness of heart you have, the more free you will be from designs and selfish carnalities. Go therefore to the Lord, and pray unto him for a plain and open spirit.

And in case you are to deal with any fleshly concernment, there watch most. A good man should be spiritual in carnal things. But when we meddle with carnal things, we are apt to be carnalized with them; and therefore the more carnal the concernment is, the more do you watch and pray, lest you enter into this temptation.

Be sure that you take heed of conversing with carnal and

wicked company: "Evil words corrupt good manners," saith the apostle. And what good words shall ye have with them? With them ye shall meet with that which shall prejudice you against what is good, and those that are good. Would ye therefore be freed from the carnality of profession? Take heed how you come into carnal wicked company.

Call yourself often to an account, and examine your ways, whether they be spiritual or carnal. Come, oh, my soul, thou hast been in such a company, but hast thou not been frothy, vain, passionate, or carnal in it? Thou hast been this day amongst those that are spiritual; but hast not thou been carnal in the midst of them? Come, O my soul, thou hast been at such a work this day, but hast thou not been selfish in it; hast not thou desired to be seen therein; hast not thou been carnal even in thy spirituals? Thus daily call yourselves to an account. And

Consider but this one thing, That the only way to lose a mercy, is to be carnal in it. If you be a professor, one that God loves, the more carnal engines you use to obtain a mercy, the more like you are to lose it; and in avoiding of misery, the more carnal your engines are to avoid it, the more like it is for to come upon you: if you be wicked and ungodly, the Lord, it may be, will let you obtain your ends by your carnal engines: but if you be godly, the more carnal engines you use to obtain a mercy, the more like you are to lose it. Now therefore as you do desire to avoid misery, and to obtain mercy, labour to be more spiritual; take heed of carnal engines in all your designs; make it your work and business to be more spiritual; rest not upon your holy mount, saying, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord;" for it is carnal; and take heed of divisions, strifes, and envyings; "For if these things be among us, are we not carnal?" And this may easily be; for you see the text, and you remember the doctrine. Possibly great professors may be very carnal. Wherefore let us all make it our work and business to be more spiritual.

SERMON VI.

WHAT OUR WORK IS, AND HOW TO BE DONE.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work,” &c.—ECCLES. IX. 10.

SOME think that Solomon speaks these words in the person of an epicure; as if he should say, “Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we shall die.” But an epicure doth not use to speak so religiously. An epicure doth not mind the acceptance of God. But Solomon here saith, “Eat and drink with joy, for God accepteth thy works.” verse 7. An epicure doth not look upon this life, “and the days thereof as vanity,” which Solomon here doth (verse 9.) An epicure doth not look upon these outward things and blessings of this life, as the gift of God; Solomon here doth, verse 9. But in this Scripture, Solomon tells us, That a man should cheerfully take all the good that God doth put into his hand to have, verse 7, 8, 9. And that he should industriously do all that work which God hath put into his hand for to do, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do,” &c. verse 10. Where ye have an injunction, and the reason of that injunction. The injunction in these words, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do,” or is in the power of thy hand to do, as some translations have it, “do it with thy might.” The reason in these words, “For there is no work,” &c., that is, there is nothing in the grave which you can turn your hand unto; for the word γ is sometimes put for work, sometimes for device, sometimes for knowledge, and sometimes for wisdom. So that from these words you may observe thus much; that it is our duty to do that work with all our might, which is in the power of our hand to do. For the clearing whereof, we must first inquire what this phrase, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do,” or whatsoever is in the power of thine hand, doth import. Now if ye consult the Scripture, it implies, authority, ability, opportunity.

It implies authority or commission. That which falleth within the compass of our commission and authority, is, “in the power of our hand.” Upon this account Abraham said unto Sarah concerning her maid, Hagar, “Behold thy maid is in thine hand,” Gen. xvi. 6., that is, within the compass of

thine authority. *Illud vere possumus, quod jure possumus*; Though a man be able to do a work, yet if it be not lawful, or within the compass of his calling and commission; it is not in the power of his hand to do it.

As the words do imply authority, so they do imply an ability. For though a man have the power of authority to do a work, yet if he have not the power of ability to do it, it is not in the power of his hand to do it, "Knowest thou not, (said Laban to Jacob) that it is in the power of my hand to do thee hurt;" Gen. xxxi. 29, that is, knowest thou not that I have power and strength, and ability for to do thee hurt. But,

As the words do imply an ability, so they do imply opportunity and occasion; for though a man have both power of authority and of ability to do a work, yet if he have not opportunity to do it, that work is not in the power of his hand to do, "And let it be when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion shall serve." 1 Sam. x. 7. In the Hebrew, as your margin tells you, it is, "as thy hand shall find to do." And if ye look into Scripture, you shall find that a man is said to do that work which he doth occasion, though that work be done by another. It is said of Judas, "That he purchased a field with the reward of iniquity." Acts i. 18. "He brought the thirty pieces of silver to the priests, and threw them down in the temple, and departed," Matt. xxvii. 3, 5. If he threw them down in the temple, and left them with the priests, how did he purchase the field? Yes, says the interlineary gloss, *Possidit quia possideri fecit*, he purchased it, because he did that work which did administer the occasion of this purchase. Look therefore when a work is within the compass of our commission, and which we have ability and opportunity to do, then it is truly said to be in the power of our hand, and that is the work which our hand finds to do; so that whatever work that is, which God doth betrust us with, if we have ability and opportunity to do it, that we are to do with all our might.

Well, but then, when may a man be said to do this work of God with his might, or with all his might?

I answer, it imports several things, He that will do the work of God with all his might, must do it with all his soul in opposition unto heart-division. As in the New Testa-

ment, there is mention of *διψυχος ανηρ*, "a double-minded man:" so in the Old Testament ye read of a divided heart, לב ולב, "An heart and an heart." And the word לב, heart is sometimes put for the affections, and sometimes for the conscience: yea, the Hebrew hath no other proper word for conscience, but the word heart. Therefore says the apostle, "If thy heart condemn thee, (that is) if thy conscience condemn thee," that is an Hebraism. Now the heart of the affection may run one way, and the heart of the conscience may go another way. The heart of Herod's conscience went with John the Baptist, but the heart of his affection went with the dancing damsel. The heart of a drunkard's conscience is to leave his drunkenness, but the heart of his affections is to his drunken company. But where a man doth the work of the Lord with all his might, he doth it with all his soul, in opposition unto heart-division.

And as he must do it with all his soul in opposition unto heart-division, so he must do the work of the Lord with all his understanding, in opposition unto unskilfulness. For, says Solomon, "It is the property of a fool, not to know the way to the city," Eccles. x. "The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them; because he knows not how to go to the city," that is, saith Luther, he wearieth out himself in difficult things and questions, when he doth not know that which is ordinary and necessary for him to know; "he knows not the way to the city:" but as for the wise man, saith he, "his heart is at his right hand," verse 2. "A wise man's heart is at his right hand:" that is, he doth his work with dexterity, in opposition unto all unskilfulness.

And as he doth God's work with dexterity, in opposition to all unskilfulness, so he doth it with all his affections, in opposition unto lukewarmness and remissness. For as the philosopher observes, All remissness doth arise from the mixture of some contrary: now where there is a mixture of the contrary, a man cannot do his work with all his might. But,

As he must do God's work with all his affection, in opposition unto lukewarmness; so he must do it with all his ability, in opposition unto all reserves; Ananias and Sapphira did not do God's work with all their might; why? because they had their reserves: but Moses did God's work with

all his might, when he brought the people out of Egypt; why? because he left not an hoof behind him; he had no reserves. So now, when a man will not leave an hoof behind him, but doth God's work without all reserves; then he doth it with all his might. Yet.

As he must do it with all his ability, in opposition unto all reserves; so he must do it with his diligence and industry, in opposition unto sloth and negligence. "For he that is slothful in his business, is brother to the scatterer," saith Solomon. Do you therefore ask when a man may be said to do God's work with all his might? I answer it implies these things. He must do it with all his soul in opposition to all division of heart: with all his dexterity in opposition unto all unskilfulness: with all his affections, in opposition unto all lukewarmness and remissness: with all his ability, in opposition unto all reserves: and with all his industry and diligence, in opposition unto all sloth and negligence.

Well, but then, why and upon what account or reason must we do God's work with all our might?

I answer. It is God's will we should do so; it is his commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. iv. 5, 6. Here are three alls; "All thy soul, all thy heart, and all thy might." And lest you should think that there may be some abatement in New Testament times, ye shall find that when Christ cites those words he adds a fourth all. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind," Luke x. 27. Here are four alls. There is no abatement then in our gospel times. Now if this be the mind and will of God, is not this reason enough for us? I have read of one bishop in the primitive times, whose name was *Quodvulteus*, that is, *Quod vult Deus*, What God will. And indeed methinks that this should be the name of every christian, *Quodvulteus*, what God will. We all profess ourselves the children of Abraham: he went blindfold into God's commandments, and subscribed to a blank. Now we have commandment for this both in the Old and New Testament. It is scriptural.

As it is scriptural, so it is a rational thing that we should do God's work with all our might. For is it not a reasonable thing that we should give God his due, his own?

Now all our might is God's due. *Non est devotionis*, says Prosper. It is not matter of devotion to give all unto God within a little; *sed fraudis est*, it is matter of fraud to keep a little from God.

And is it not a reasonable thing for us to love God, "who hath loved us, and given himself for us and to us;" who is the proper object of our love, "and altogether lovely;" who only gives the affection of love, and the thing loved; and who only can recompence your love with love again? Now it is the only measure of true love to know no measure. *Non amat, qui non zelat*.

And is it not a reasonable thing that we should do God's work as fully as our own? Now if you have any business to do in the world, you will turn every stone, you will do it with all your might. Have you not sinned with all your might; and shall your sins be crying sins, and your prayers whispering prayers? Will you run when the world calls, and will you creep when God calls? You will not bear it that a man speak to you when you speak to another; and will you bear it, that the world should speak to you while you speak to God. But,

Is it not a reasonable thing that we should do that work with all our might which is our only work, and the work which we came into the world for? Now we did not come into the world to get riches or credit. We have nothing here to do but to serve the Lord; all other things are subordinate to that. And if you look into Scripture, you shall find that the Lord only stands upon this work. "Thou shalt worship the Lord, and him only shalt thou serve; only let your conversation be as becometh," &c. Here doth the *only* stand. Yea, says Solomon, this is the whole of man, Eccles. xii. 13, "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man." The word *duty* is not in the original; but "fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man." Now is it not rational that we should give God his due? That we should love God; that we should do his work as fully as our own; that we should do that work with all our might, which is our only work. Surely therefore it is very rational that we should do God's work with all our might. Yet

As it is rational that we should do thus, so it is a dangerous

thing not to do it; "For cursed is every one that doth the work of the Lord negligently." Sloth and the curse grow together upon one stalk. The Jewish Rabbins do observe, that there is a three-fold *Amen* that is not right, which, say they, is followed with a three-fold answerable punishment. There is *Amen amputatum*, *Amen acceleratum*, and *Amen pupillare*, or *Orban amen*. *Amputatum amen*, when a man doth cut short his duty, and say, *Amen*, unto half duty: *amen acceleratam*, is when he doth huddle over his duty and say, *Amen*, to an hastened duty: *amen pupillare*, as when a man doth perform his duty without understanding and heart, and doth say, *Amen*, to he knows not what. Now say they, If a man shall cut short his duty, God shall cut short his comforts; if a man shall hasten and huddle over his duty, God will hasten and not prolong his days; and if a man shall perform his duty without heart and understanding, then his children shall be orphans; as his duty was without heart and knowledge, so his children shall be without parents. Thus they express the punishment of doing God's work negligently; but ye know what the prophet Malachi saith, "Cursed is every one that hath in his flock a male, and offers a corrupt thing to God;" as if he should say, Cursed is that man or woman who hath masculine affections for the world, and female affections for the work of God. Oh, now if it be the will and mind of God that we should do his work with all our might, and a rational thing to do so, and a dangerous thing not to do it, then surely it is our duty and matter of great concernment to do the work that God hath given us to do with all our might.

Why, but will some say, this seems contrary to Scripture, reason, and our own judgment: to Scripture, for the Scripture saith, "Use the world as if you used it not; to reason, for the magistrate is to do justice, and if he do it with all his might, there will be *summum jus*, and *summum jus* is *summa injuria*; and to our own judgment, for according to our own principles we are able to do nothing, but according to this text and doctrine, there is something "in the power of our hand to do." How can this therefore agree either with Scripture, reason, or our own judgment and principles?

Yes, very well, for doth the scripture say that we are to use the world as if we used it not; and doth it say here,

“whatever is in the power of thine hand to do, do it with all thy might?” Then put these together, and what is the result but this, that we should use all our skill and might, “to use the world as if we used it not.” And as for the reason about the magistrate, though the magistrate is to do justice, yet he is to shew mercy also; if he have righteousness in the one hand, he is to have mercy in the other; “I will sing of mercy and judgment,” saith David; Seneca tells us, that many punishments are as much disparagement to the magistrate, as many funerals are to the physican. Ye know that Moses was the first magistrate that Israel had, and did not he do justice? Yes, yet he was the meekest man upon earth. Why so? But to shew that the dispensations of justice will grow very well upon the disposition of meekness. And as for our own principles and judgment, who doth not say, and say true, That every man hath power to do more than he doth; and what if I should say with some, That God will condemn no man for that sin which he hath not a power to avoid? The heathens ye know are judged by the law of nature, but though they are not able to keep the whole law of nature, yet they are able to avoid these sins against nature for which they are condemned; so under the gospel, though a man be not able to convert and turn unto God, and keep the whole law of the gospel, yet he may be able to avoid the sins against the gospel, as positive unbelief and resistance, for which he shall be condemned; thus some. But I need not say thus, neither shall I need to enter into this debate here, for whoever liveth under the gospel is either godly or ungodly; if he be ungodly, he hath power to do more than he doth; and if he be godly, his will is freed; for “whom the Son makes free, he is free indeed,” though his will be not *libera*, free, yet his will is *liberata*, freed; as Austin speaks. So that thus now you see there is nothing in this truth that is contrary to Scripture, reason, or our own principles; yet give me leave to bound it with these cautions,

Though you must do God’s work with all your might, yet “your moderation must be known unto all men;” some will not let God’s work pass through their hands, but they will have some toll for their own interest. Joshua did not so, he conquered the land of Canaan, and when he came to divide it, what a little thong did he cut out of that leather

for himself and family; some will not do God's work, but they will carry it on with their own passion. It is said of Scanderbeg, that great soldier, that when he spake sometimes of Christ, he would be so earnest that the blood would spirt out of his lips: but as God's grace hath no need of our sin, so his work hath no need of our passions; though therefore you do the work of the Lord with all your might, yet you are to manage it with mildness and sweetness, therein also your moderation is to be known to all.

Though you do the work of your hand with all your might, yet you must not look upon the success of your work as the fruit of your hand, but of God's hand; when Israel went out against Amalek, Moses lifted up his hands, and Israel prevailed; then Joshua built an altar, and called it *Jehova-nissi*; for, says the text, Exod. xvii. 15, "The Lord hath sworn that he will have war with Amalek;" but, verse 16, in the Hebrew, as the margin tells, it is the hand on the throne of the Lord; and why, says Glassius, is it said, the hand on the throne of the Lord, but to shew that this victory was not from Moses' hand, though it was a praying hand, but from God's hand. Luther tells us of Staupitius, that when he came to his government, he said, I will govern according to law; but when he saw that his government did not succeed, then he said, I will govern according to the customs of the place; when he saw that succeeded not, then said he, I will govern by the Scripture; when he saw that succeeded not well, then said he, I will do what I can according to Scripture and law, and leave the success unto God; and then his government prospered. And you see how it is with a child, a father bids him do this or that which he knows he cannot do; therefore he secretly puts his own hand to the work, and he praises his child, and the child thinks that his hand did it. So here, God bids us do his work with all our might, and we do so, and have success in the work, and we think the success is the fruit of our hand, whereas in truth it is the fruit of our Father's hand. Mark therefore what follows in the next words to the text; in this verse, saith Solomon, "Whatever thou findest in thy hand to do, do it with all thy might;" but in the next verse he says, "I returned and saw, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." Why doth he add these words imme-

diately, but to shew thus much, that though we do God's work with all our might, yet we must not look upon the success as the fruit of our own hand. And thus now this doctrine is cleared, proved, vindicated, and cautioned; and so I come to the application.

Now, by way of application, methinks this doctrine looks wishly upon all the congregation, for what man or woman is there amongst you, whom God hath not betruſted with some work or other? It is true, indeed, that he who had but one talent, wrapped it up in the napkin. Those are most apt to be idle that have least, yet every one hath some talent or other, some work or other, that every one hath in the power of his hand. Now, therefore, in the name of the Lord, I say unto you all, "Whatever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

But how shall I be able to do the work which God hath put into my hand with all my might?

I answer, you must know what that work is which is in the power of your hand, else you cannot turn your hand to do it with all your might. Now,

Look what that work is which is *opus diei*, the work of the day, which can neither be done in heaven nor hell; that is now in the power of your hand to do. There is some work which we may do in this life, that can neither be done in heaven nor hell. Preaching and hearing the word cannot be done in heaven nor hell; repentance cannot be done in heaven nor hell; patience under affliction cannot be done in heaven nor hell; contributing to or helping the poor cannot be done in heaven nor hell. Now look what that work is that can neither be done in heaven nor hell, that is the work of your present day, and is in the power of your hand to do.

Look what that work is which is the work of your place, calling, or relation, that is the work which is in the power of your hand to do. As suppose you be a magistrate, it is the work of the christian magistrate to safe-guard and defend religion: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye princes and nobles, kiss the Son," Psalm ii. 1. It is the work of the magistrate to preserve the public peace, for he is the head of the community, and therefore must look to the welfare of the body. It is the work of the magistrate to dispense justice and righteousness, so as to encourage the good and be a terror to evil

doers. Rom. xiii. It is the work of the magistrate to assist the minister. By the hand of Moses and Aaron, God led his people of old; not by the hand of Moses alone, nor by the hand of Aaron alone, but by the hand of Moses and Aaron. It is the work of the magistrate to see that the poor be relieved and provided for. Psalm lxxii. Or suppose you be a minister, it is the work of the minister to walk before the people, as the *dux gregis*, before the rest of the flock, in all holy life and godly conversation. Conversation is continual preaching. It is the work of the minister to study the Scriptures much, for he hath more help that way than others. It is the work of the minister to preach the word plainly, powerfully and continually, both for conviction, conversion and edification. It is the work of the minister to separate between the precious and the vile in church administrations. It is the work of the minister to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort the afflicted, to visit and pray over the sick: "Is any one sick, let him call for the elders of the church," James v. 15. Or suppose you be the governor of a family, father or master, or you be governed, a child or servant; it is the work of the governor to bring up his children or servants in the nurture and education of the Lord. It is the word of inferiors to be obedient to their parents or master. It is the work of children and those that are young to learn some trade and calling, that they may live like men and women another day, and do good to others. It is the work of those that are young to stock and store themselves with principles of religion. Luther, a great doctor in the church, professed that he was yet, *catechismi discipulus*. And what is the reason, saith Calvin, that men fall into errors when they are men, but because they did not learn the principles of religion when they were young? Or suppose you be one of this town or of these congregations, it is your work to pray for them that are over you in the Lord; it is your work to attend on the means of grace, to receive the gospel, and to improve your gospel opportunities. Have ye forgotten, O ye people of Yarmouth, how far ye would run and go formerly for a dishful of water; and now a spring and fountain of grace is opened amongst you, will ye not improve it? If a mine of gold or silver be opened in a country, will they not dig it out? Now through grace, there is a mine of gospel treasures opened amongst

you, and will ye not dig for it as for hidden treasure? This is your work; for look what that work is which is the work of your calling, place and relation, that is the work that is in the power of your hand to do.

Look what that work is, which is directly contrary to that sin wherein you have notoriously lived, or been guilty of; that is the work which God calls you to, and is in the power of your hand. I have read of a young man that was much given to scorning, jeering and despising of his mother; but after it pleased God to work savingly upon his heart, whenever he saw his mother come into the room, he would fall down upon his knees. I commend not his discretion. But if ye look into the New Testament, ye shall meet with three great converts, Zaccheus, the jailor, and Paul; and what did they do, but that work which was directly contrary to the sin which they were notoriously guilty of and given to? Zaccheus had been an oppressor, but being converted, "Behold, Lord, (said he,) the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man I restore fourfold." The jailor whipped the apostles, and put them into the stocks in the inner prison; but when converted, then he brought them into his house, washed their stripes, and set meat before them. Paul was notorious for blaspheming, and persecuted the church; but when converted, then he preached the gospel, which before he persecuted. So that look what that work is, which is directly contrary to your notorious sin; that is the work that God calls you to, and which your hand should find to do.

Look what that work is which you are spared or raised up for, either from poverty or sickness; that is the work which is in the power of your hand now to do. There is a great controversy at this day, how God's pre-determination, and the liberty of man's will, can consist or stand together; the reconciliation whereof was committed to Francis de Arriva, which he shunning, fell into a great sickness, so dangerous, that the physicians gave him over for a dead man: but all of a sudden, in a day's time he revived, and was so well, that the physicians could not believe that he was well; but he recovering, thought that he was spared on purpose to undertake that work of reconciliation: which thereupon he did, and hath said as much in it as any other. And you know what

Mordecai said to Esther, "Who knows but God raised thee up on purpose," &c. Look therefore what that work is, which your former poverty or sickness points at, and for which you are thus raised up; that is the work that is in the power of your hand to do. Yea,

Look what that work is, that you have special ability and opportunity to do above others, that is the work that is in the power of your hand to do. As suppose you have a great estate in the world, and have no children, it is your work to relieve and help the poor. Therefore, says Solomon, "Thou shalt not withhold goods from the owners thereof, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it," Prov. iii. 27. Would ye, therefore, know what that work is, which is in the power of your hand? I answer in these several things. Look what that work is which is the work of your present day, which cannot be done in heaven nor hell; what work that is, that is the work of your place or relation; what work that is, that is directly opposite to your notorious sin; what work that is, which you are spared and raised up for; and what work that is, which you have an ability and opportunity to do above others. That and all these are the works which are in the power of your hand to do.

But, if you would do God's work with all your might, then you must observe where your true strength lies, and apply yourself thereunto. Now your strength lies in Christ, "the Lord our righteousness and our strength." Under Christ your strength lies in your call to your work. "Go in this thy might," said the Lord to Gideon, when he gave him a call. Under Christ your strength lies in the promise, for *lex jubet, gratia juvat*; the law commands, and the promise helps. Under Christ your strength lies in your comfort: he works faintly, that doth work uncomfortably. "The joy of the Lord is our strength." It is true in this sense; and under Christ your strength lies in dependance upon God for strength. Our strength is to sit still; that is, to depend and wait on God for his strength. Herein lies your true strength. Would you, therefore, do God's work with all your might, then away to your true strength.

And, if you would do God's work with all your might, then take heed that you do not think the way to heaven is easy, nor that any thing is small that lies between God and

you. *Difficultas acuit conatum* ; Difficulty sharpens diligence. But if a man thinks a thing is easy, he will not put his full strength and might to the work. Gregory de Valentia tells of a merchant, that professed he would be a papist, and no protestant ; for said he, If I be a papist, my work is short and easy ; it is but believe as the church believes : but if I be a Lutheran, then I must learn catechisms, and search the Scriptures, but I have no time for that ; therefore I will be a papist, for that way is easy. But we know that the way to heaven is up hill. *Nulla virtus sine lapide*. " Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life." And the more ye see these difficulties of your salvation, the more you will put your whole strength to it, and will work with all your might.

Yet if you would do God's work with all your might, then let your eye be much upon them that have done God's work fully in their day. If you be a magistrate, think on Moses ; if a minister, think on Paul ; if a private person, think on Caleb. It is recorded of Luther, that he did ordinarily spend three hours every day in prayer ; he preached much, read lectures, and wrote nine or ten great volumes in folio. It is recorded of Calvin, that he preached yearly two hundred and eighty sermons, and read one hundred and eighty lectures ; every lecture being the length of a sermon. Once in a week he met with the elders of the church. Much in private duty and wrote letters to all the churches. So that the care of all the churches lay upon him ; and wrote twelve great volumes in folio. Ye have seen the three volumes of Mr. Perkins in folio, all which he wrote with his left hand, for his right hand was naturally lame : his motto was, *Hoc age* ; as if he had said, What thou doest, do with thy might. Dr. Sibbs his emblem, was a candle burning with these words over it, *Per lucendo pereo* ; By giving light to others I consume myself. And ye have heard of that good old man Mr. Dod, who went up and down doing good, and preaching all the day long : when his friends observed that he was spent, and desired him to spare himself, his usual saying was, Hear this one thing more, it may be I shall never speak to you again ; and so he went on and continued till he was eighty six ; and so died in his full strength of goodness. Now when I consider these men, I confess before you all, that I am ashamed

And if men would but seriously consider these and such like examples of men that have done much for God in their day; they would certainly be provoked to do God's work with all their might.

Yet if you would do God's work with all your might; then converse much with the greatness of God. Who can stand in the beams of the sun, and not shine with the beams thereof? Much less shall you stand in the beams of God's attributes, and not shine therewith. The sight of God's greatness will *grandire*, greaten your hearts and spirits, and make them do much and great things for God. Therefore converse much with the greatness of God. But,

Be sure that you lay in against reproaches. For when you ride apace, the dogs will bark, and the dust will be raised: if you go easily, you raise no dust, neither will the dogs bark. So if you will go a slow pace to heaven, you shall not be reviled, or reproached by the world: but if you will not put on with all your might, then you shall be reproached. Therefore if you will do God's work with all your might, you must be well laid in against all reproaches, because it is the work of your hand.

Again if you would do it with all your might, then you must go to God to open your hand; and when he shall open your hand, and breathe upon your soul, be sure that you improve all those gales. For Job tells us, "That he sealeth up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work." Sometimes he seals up the hand of the seamen, that they cannot sail; sometimes he sealeth up the hand of the husbandmen, that they cannot sow nor reap: sometimes he sealeth up the hand of the merchant and tradesman, that he cannot vend his commodity; sometimes the hand of the preacher, that he cannot preach; sometimes the hand of the christian, that he cannot pray. And why doth he thus seal up the hand of every man, but that all may know his work? Would ye therefore do the work of your hand with all your might, then go to God to open and unseal your hand; and if he breathe upon your heart, then be sure that you improve these gales.

Do ye therefore now ask, What shall I do, that I may do the work of God with all my might. Then remember these several things.

You must know what that work is which is in the power of your hand.

You must observe where your true strength lies, and apply yourself thereto.

You must not think the way to heaven easy, or any thing small that is between God and you.

You must eye them much who have served God fully in their day.

You must converse much with the greatness of God.

You must be well laid in against all reproaches.

And then you must go to God to open and unseal your hand, improving all his gales. Now give me leave to lay some three or four motives before you that may persuade hereunto, and I shall wind up all.

The first motive is this, Look whatever work that is which is in the power of your hand to do, that God will require at your hand. If you be a magistrate, and it be your work to preserve peace, to suppress the multitude of ale-houses, and profanation of the Lord's day, then God will require this at your hand. If you be a minister, and it be your work to "preach the gospel in season and out of season;" then God will require this work at your hand. If you be a parent, and it be your work to bring up your children in the nurture and education of the Lord; if you be a child or young person, and it be your work to stock yourself with principles of religion; then God will require these works at your hands. And if you be one of this town, and of this congregation, and it be your work to receive the gospel, and to improve your day of grace; then God will require this work at your hand. Remember the parable of the talents, &c. If God will require the work of our hands at our hands; why shall we not do that work with all our might? But

As God will call you to an account for all that work which is in the power of your hand: so you do not know how soon he may take your work out of your hands; how soon he may take you from your work, or your work from you. We ordinarily think that we shall not die before our work be done: but if you look wishly upon God's dispensations, you shall find that death doth sometimes press men from their shop-board, when much work is cut out before them. You all know what an useful man good king Josiah was as a magistrate, yet he died in the midst of his work, when he was but thirty-nine years old. Ye know what an useful man

John the Baptist was ; yet he died in the midst of his days, when not above thirty three years old. Is it not known to some what a great workman Dr. Whitaker was here in England, of whom it was said, That he never was less idle, than when idle ; yet he died in the midst of his work when he was but forty-four years old. It is ordinarily known what a blessed instrument Mr. Perkins was, of whom the preacher said at his funeral, Here lies that blessed Perkins, who first taught England for to worship God : yet he died in the midst of his work, when he was but forty-seven years old. And who hath not heard of Dr. Preston, what a great workman he was in God's vineyard, of whom I may say, Who though dead, yet speaketh, in his precious books that are amongst you ; yet he died in the midst of his work when he was but forty-one years old. I might instance in Mr. Burroughs, and others ; yea, in divers good christians in this place, who have died in the midst of their work and time. It was not long since a preacher now in heaven preached on this text at the Guild at Norwich at the installment of the mayor ; and before the year came about, the mayor died. So that death doth sometimes press us from our shop-board before our work be made up. And I pray mind the text a little, " Whatever is in the power of thine hand to do, do it with all thy might : " for, says Solomon, " In the grave there is no work nor device, whither thou goest. " He doth not say, whither thou shalt go, or whither thou must go, but " whither thou goest. " You go sometimes to church, and sometimes not ; you go sometimes to sea, and sometimes not ; you go sometimes into the country, and sometimes not : but whether you go to the church, or whether you go to sea, or whether you go into the country, still thou goest to the grave. And ye know what Christ saith, " The night cometh wherein no man worketh. " Now if the night cometh, and thou goest ; then why should you not do your work with all your might whilst it is day. Certainly he that plays away his day shall go to bed in the dark.

Who is there in all this congregation, that doth not desire a comfortable death-bed when it comes. As the heathen man said to a great congregation, I know all your thoughts ; for every man desires to buy cheap, and to sell dear ; so in

this respect, I may say, I know all your thoughts, viz., that when death comes, you may have a comfortable death-bed. In the time of your death-bed sickness, you will then be able to do little ; when your pains shall be great, you will be able to pray little, to hear little, to read or meditate little, and then what will be your comfort in that death-bed-little but this? Well, though I can do but little now, yet I have prayed and served God with all my might when I was well, and therefore I have comfort now. Now therefore if you desire that you may have much comfort in your death-bed-little, why should you not do the present work of your hand with all your might? But,

In the last place, Who is there in all this congregation that doth not desire to rejoice with all his heart in these blessings which he hath in his hand ; now look once more upon the words of the text, and ye shall find, that as Solomon in God's name commands you "to rejoice with all your heart in the blessings which you have," ver. 7—9, so in these words he commands you to do God's work with all your might. And why are these things thus knit together, but to teach us thus much, that whoever will do with all his might the work that is in his hand to do, he may and shall rejoice with all his heart in the blessings which he hath in his hand to enjoy? But above all ye know how fully Christ did your work for you, and will you do his work by halves? Never speak of rest here, there is rest enough in the grave, and recompence enough in heaven. Either the work that is in your hand is worth your while, or it is not ; if it be not worth your while, why should you do it at all ; and if it be worth your while, why should you not do it with all your might? And oh, that there were an heart in you all to do so. If the weight of this truth have fallen in power upon your souls, I dare say, some of you will go away and say, What have I done all this while? I confess I have done God's work by the bye, and when I heard ministers pressing such truths as these, I have said, Well, yet I hope I may go to heaven with less ado, but now through grace I will go away, and whatever is in the power of my hand to do, I will do it with all my might. Thus do, and I shall obtain the end of my preaching, and you, under Christ, shall obtain the end of your

practice, the salvation of your souls. Wherefore think on all these things and the Lord bless them to you.

SERMON VII.

SOUL-RESIGNATION INTO THE HANDS OF GOD.

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,” LUKE xxiii. 46.

THESE are the last words of Christ on the cross, the seventh speech; and of all others the most exemplary for us. “Into thy hands,” that is, into thy charge, care, and tuition. God hath no hands at all, for he is a Spirit; but by his hands we are to understand his keeping, charge, and custody. Numb. xxxiii. 1, it is said, “The children of Israel went forth out of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron;” that is, under the charge of Moses and Aaron; so the translators do interpret it. For whereas, chap. xxxi. 49, it is said by the officers of the army, “Thy servants have taken the sum of the men that were under our charge;” the margin tells you that in the Hebrew it is, “under our hand.” So Ps. xci. 11, 12, “He shall give his angels charge over thee, and they shall bear thee up in their hands.” By the hands of God therefore, understand his keeping and tuition; Father, into thy keeping and tuition I do commend my spirit; the word is, *παραδωσομαι*, I will commend; but our Saviour follows the Septuagint, and the Septuagint the Hebrew of Ps. xxxi., whence these words are taken. And it is ordinary with the Hebrew to put the future for the present time. I will, or I do commend my spirit, that is, my soul, myself, but especially my soul; the thing commended was his soul; the person to whom he did commend his soul, was his Father; the time when he commended his soul, was at the instant of his death, for having said so, he gave up the ghost. Now if ye ask why Christ did at this time especially commend and resign himself and soul up to God? I answer, For these reasons.

Thereby he testified that he had not lost his confidence in God as a Father; in the former words he had cried out and said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Men might think if he had so died, that he had quite lost his confidence; but now that he concludes all with this, it shews that God had not forsaken him, and that he had not lost his confidence in God. Possibly a dying christian may be in an agony at the beginning of his sickness, yet may sweetly believe at the last. In the former part of his death, Christ was in an agony, but he closes up all with full assurance of faith: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Thereby also he did commend the souls of all those that he died for, into the hands of God: for he was now offering up himself through the eternal Spirit unto God for us, as our common person; and as in his prayer, John xvii., he did not only pray for himself, but for us, so in this act and deed he did commend the souls and spirits of all those that he died for, into the hands of God: and as he died in our room and stead, so in our room he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And when should he do this more fitly, than at the last of his suffering?

Thereby also he became an example unto us; that when we come to die or suffer, we should die with the Scripture in our hearts and mouths, for this was Scripture, as ye read Ps. xxxi. 5. And that we should suffer and die believing and resigning up ourselves and souls into the hand of God as a Father. And for this end certainly Christ did now speak these words, for says he, "I have power to lay down my life, and to take it up again;" and if he had power to take it up again, why did he resign it into the hands of God, as a *depositum* to be kept for him? Surely for this reason, that in all this matter he might be an example unto us of soul-resignation into the hands of God. And so the doctrine is this:

It is a good thing for us to resign up our souls into the hands of God, and that especially at the time of our death and greatest sufferings; what Christ did, and did as our example, that is good for us to do: this hath Christ done before us; good therefore it is for us to do it, good at all times, especially at some times, and most especially at the time of our death and sufferings.

It is God's due, and it is our duty; for what is resignation of our souls or selves unto God, but that act of faith, whereby we do put ourselves under the power, wisdom, and mercy of God, to be ordered and disposed of according to the good

will of God? This is our duty, and it is God's due. Is it not the duty of an inferior to resign up himself and his will to the hands and will of his superior? Doth not the wife resign up her will to the will of her husband; the servant to the will of his master; the child to the will of his father; and is not God much more our superior; is not he our Husband, our Lord, our Father in most transcendent manner? Surely then, this soul-resignation is both God's due, and it is our duty.

Yea, and it is a very profitable thing for us to do it, hereby we make a virtue of necessity; and where can we lodge our souls in safer hands? If a man cannot keep a thing himself, but must betrust and deposit it in other hands, will he not do it in the safest hands that he can find? Now three things there are that are required to a safe hand: power, wisdom, and love. If I deposit a thing in a man's hand to keep, he must be able to keep it for me against violence, else his hand is no safe hand; though he be able and have power to keep it for me, yet if he be prodigal and lavish, and not wise, I shall not count his hand a safe hand to keep my *depositum*; but though he be never so wise, yet if he be not my friend, I shall not betrust him with any great matter: but if a man be able, wise and friendly, then his hand is a safe hand to keep my *depositum*. Now God is all this, almighty, infinitely, wise, and our best friend and acquaintance? Wherefore, says the apostle, "I know whom I have trusted, and I am persuaded that he is able that which I have committed to him, against that day," 2 Tim. 1. 12. As if he said, Do ye blame me for venturing so much in the cause of the gospel? Why I have but deposited what I laid out for God, and am persuaded that he will not embezzle my trust; but will truly and faithfully keep it for me: for he is able, and I have experience of him: for I know whom I have trusted, he is no stranger to me, and I am persuaded that he will keep it for me unto that day. God's hand then is the safest hand.

And again if we do not commend, commit, and resign ourselves and souls into his hands, we must be responsible for them ourselves. If a woman have a child put to nurse to her, and she go abroad, and do not commit the child to some safe hands, and the child come to any hurt, she must be responsible for it. If we commit our souls into God's hands, he

will be responsible for them. "Who will keep that which I have committed to him unto that day," says Paul: but if we do not commit our souls into his hands to keep, and they get any hurt, we must be responsible for them ourselves. And are we able to answer for our own souls? Surely, no. Oh, what a good thing is it then to resign and commit our souls unto God.

What benefit shall we get thereby? Much every way. This resignation of our souls and selves unto God, is an inlet to many mercies, graces, and comforts.

As for mercies and blessings; what greater blessing can there be in this world, than to enjoy one's-self; under God to enjoy one's-self, and to be free from all things? Paul counted it a blessing to have the comforts of this world, and to be under the power of none, but to stand free from all; now there is no such way in the world, to stand free from all things, as to resign up ourselves, souls and wills unto God. *Hæc est vera libertas servire Deo*, True liberty doth consist in perfect subjection to God; who more free than Christ, yet who more subject to the will of God than Christ? "Not my will, but thy will be done:" no such way to enjoy one's-self, as to give up ourselves unto God. Doth not the beggar enjoy herself most in giving up herself to a prince in marriage?

Yea, what greater blessing is there in the world, or in the world to come, than to enjoy God? Now if you do resign and give up yourself unto God, you shall enjoy God, for God will give down himself unto you. It is observed, that God the Father never gave down that great dispensation of the Spirit unto Christ, till Christ had thus resigned up his spirit unto the Father. Look what we do give up to God, that God will give down to us in a better edition; yea, he will not only give ourselves to ourselves, if we resign ourselves unto him; but if you resign and give up yourself unto him, he will give down himself unto you; if you resign up your spirit unto him, he will give down his Spirit unto him. Thus this soul-resignation is an inlet to this mercy.

Yet you will all say, it is a great mercy and blessing to have your prayers and desires granted; then read what the Psalmist saith, Psalm xxxvii. 4, "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way to the Lord, trust also in him, and he will bring it

to pass." Dost thou say, I pray and use endeavours; yet the thing prayed for, endeavoured after, doth not come to pass? Why, then commit thy way to the Lord; resign up thy way unto God, and he will bring it to pass. I remember a notable story that Thaulerus hath; this Thaulerus lived in the beginning of the German reformation, a little before Luther, whom Luther seems to prize above all authors; *Da mihi istum insignem Theologum Thaulerum*, said he, Give me that eminent author Thaulerus. Now this Thaulerus tells us of a certain woman, that was much given to prayer, and had so great credit in heaven, that she did but ask and had from the hands of God; insomuch, said he, that divers came to her to pray for them, according to their necessities, whom she promised to pray for; yet sometimes did forget to pray for them: yet, says Thaulerus, the things which her friends did desire were given to them; and coming to her to thank her for her prayers; Nay, truly, said she, I am ashamed and blush before you, for if you have received the mercy, it is no thanks to me, for I forgot you. And thereupon going unto God in prayer, she begged this of God, that he would please to tell her the reason why the mercies desired were given, though she did not pray for them? Whereupon she received this answer from God, says Thaulerus,* Hear O my daughter, from the day that thou didst resign thy will up to me, I did give my will to thee. And the truth is, there is no such way to obtain what we would, as to resign up our wills unto God. Thus this soul or self-resignation is an inlet unto many mercies.

As it is an inlet unto many blessings: so it is an inlet unto many graces and duties. What grace or duty will ye instance in? Will ye instance in prayer?

It opens the sluices of prayer; and, as one speaks well, though you pray never so long or loud, yet if you do not resign up your soul and will unto God, your prayer is but nonsense, and a contradiction *in re*.

Or will ye instance in Faith? faith is a trusting unto God; now the more you betrust God with yourself, the more you trust to God. And what greater betrustment, than the resignation of ones-soul unto God?

* Audi filia mea, ex quo die tuam mihi resignasti voluntatem, ego viciesim dedi tibi meam.—Thaulerus.

Thereby you shall be contented with your condition whatever it be, with the best contentment: for there is a two-fold contentment. One, that arises from the fulness of your enjoyment; another, that arises from the apprehension of the wise carving hand of God. This last is best, and the most refined. Now if you can but truly resign yourself and will unto God, you will be thus contented.

Thereby also you will rejoice in God, and mourn for sin at once; some mourn for sin, and neglect joy in God; some joy in God, and neglect grief for sin. But if I can truly resign myself unto God, I shall grieve for sin, and rejoice in God together.

Yea, thereby also you will be able to answer unto your temptations, especially that great temptation that lies so hard upon some. You are now in a good condition; but suppose it were so and so with you, what would you do then? why, if ye have resigned yourself unto God, you will be able to say, I do not know what may befall me, but I am sure nothing shall come amiss, for I have resigned myself and my will unto God. Thus this holy resignation is, ye see, an inlet to many graces and duties.

As it is an inlet unto many graces, so it is an inlet also unto many comforts; yea indeed, unto all our comforts: for what comfort can a man have in himself or condition, till he hath truly resigned and given up himself and soul and will unto God? but being done, ye may freely go about your business. If a man have a suit in law, and have left his cause in the hand of an able, careful friend and lawyer, he is quiet: much more may we be quiet, when we have left and lodged our case and way and soul with God. "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established," Prov. xvi. 3. Not thy business and works, but thy thoughts shall be then at rest. Do not all things rest in their centre; and is not God our centre? The more indifferently that a man's heart is carried out towards changes, the more quiet and sedate is his spirit. Now when a man hath resigned himself up to God, then he will be more indifferent unto all conditions. The private soldier doth march indifferently, this way or that way, at the command of his leader; why? because he hath resigned up himself to the wisdom of his commander. The sheep is indifferently led into this pasture,

or the other; why? because resigned up to the will of the shepherd. So if our souls be truly resigned up to God, we shall be indifferently carried to this or that pasture: for we are the sheep of Christ. I remember a notable speech that Luther had to Melancthon: Melancthon being much troubled about the affairs of the churches, and the low estate of the same, Luther wrote a letter to him; and in that letter he hath this expression; Thou art much troubled and afflicted, O Melancthon; yet Philip is to be admonished and desired to leave governing the world:* as if he had said, Philip, thou undertakest to govern the world, therefore thou art thus dejected; do but leave the cause to God, and let him govern, and thou wilt be quiet and not troubled. The only way therefore to be quiet within, is to resign and give up all unto God. This self or soul resignation is an inlet unto many mercies, an inlet unto many graces, an inlet unto many comforts; surely therefore it is a good and an excellent thing to resign and give up ourselves unto God.

Well, but then how is this work to be done that we may truly resign and give up ourselves, our souls, and our wills unto God?

It is not to be done slightly and overly, but seriously and solemnly. It is an ordinary thing with men to say, "The will of the Lord be done." God's will be done, and the like. But it is one thing for a man to be indifferent in a business, saying, The will of the Lord be done; and another thing for a man to give up himself and will effectually unto God. It is one thing for a man to do this in a slighty and general way, saying, The will of the Lord be done; and another thing to make a distinct and clear resignation of his will to the will of God in particular things. Look into Scripture, and ye shall find, that wherever this work was done truly, it was done solemnly and seriously.

As this work is not to be done slightly and overly; so neither is it to be done forcedly and lastly, but freely and firstly. The first thing I do, I must commit myself, and cause, and will unto God. If a city or town be besieged, it yields and resigns at the last, because it can hold out no longer; but this resignation is a forced work; the resignation of ourselves

* Sed monendus est Philippus, ut desinat gubernare mundum.

and wills unto God is not such. When Pharaoh could stand out no longer, then he resigned up the Israelites: and so when men can hold out no longer, then they say, Well, it is the will of God that this thing should be; wherefore now, the will of the Lord be done. When they can do no other, then they resign up the thing and themselves unto God. But this true resignation is done freely and firstly, not forcedly and at last.

As it is not to be done lastly and forcedly, so it is not to be done partially, and by halves, but fully and totally. "I am thine," saith David to God, "Oh, save me," Ps. cxix. 94. When a man comes to God for mercy, he pleads not for part but all. He doth not say, Oh save my body, and not my soul; but "Oh, save me:" nor doth he say, Oh, save my soul, and not my body; but, "I am thine, oh, save me." When a man desires pardon of sin, he desires not the pardon of some, but of all. When God gives himself unto us, he gives himself wholly. This resignation of ourselves unto God, is a great sacrifice, a great offering, and it must be of all, an holocaust. God cannot, will not take less than all. He that resigns himself unto God, with a reservation of a part, doth like Ananias and Sapphira; he pretends the whole, and gives but part, and so he doth lie unto God.

As this resignation must not be done partially, and by halves, so it must not be done conditionally, but absolutely. When you have taken a servant, and you bid him do this or that, it may be he will say to you, It was none of my bargain; I bargained with you for to be your steward, but not to be your groom in your stable; or, I bargained with you to be your clerk, but not to be your scullion; this or that work which you set me about, is not according to my conditions. And so when a city besieged doth resign, it doth resign upon articles; but when a soul doth truly resign itself unto God, then no articles, no conditions. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" says Paul, oh any thing, Lord, any thing: I will return to my father's house, "and let him make me his hired servant." Do but receive me, Lord, and I will not article with thee; it is a resignation without articles. The covenant of grace, whereby God doth give himself to us, is absolute, and not conditional; so is that covenant, whereby we do resign and give up ourselves unto him. Abraham

subscribed to a blank ; so must all the children of Abraham do.

As this resignation is not to be done conditionally ; so it is not to be done passively, and in a way of submission only, but actively. It is one thing for a man to submit unto God's will, and another thing to resign up himself and will to the will of God. A man is properly said to submit, when he quietly yields unto what is done. A man is said to resign up himself and will unto God, when he doth quietly yield over his affections to the thing done as best, because God wills it. For example, I meet a thief on the way, and he takes my purse ; I submit because I cannot help myself, but I do not resign up my will to his will : I resign up my money into his hand, but not my will unto his will, nor my affections and judgment to the thing done ; judging that good which is done. But when a man doth truly resign up himself unto God, he resigns up his thoughts and judgment to the wisdom of God ; it is not a bare submission unto what is done.

As this resignation is not to be done passively, so it is not to be done deceitfully and feignedly, but in all plainness and sincerity. We read of the enemies of the Lord, that they shall submit feignedly unto him ; “ Strangers shall submit themselves to me,” Ps. xviii. 44. The margin hath it, they shall yield feigned obedience, but the Hebrew is, They shall lie unto me. “ Through the greatness of thy power thine enemies shall submit themselves to thee,” Ps. lxvi. 3 ; margin, shall yield feigned obedience ; Hebrew, shall lie unto thee. There is a feigned obedience, a feigned yielding, a lying resignation and submission unto God. The people of the Jews come to Jeremiah to go unto God for them, and they say, “ The Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us ; whether it be good, or whether it be evil,” &c. Jer. xlii. 5. Wherefore Jeremiah did intreat the Lord for them, but they would not do what they said ; whereupon said Jeremiah, “ Ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye said, We will do according to all that the Lord our God shall say,” verse 20. So that there is a lying submission, whereby men in affliction and distress, do feignedly submit and resign themselves up to God. Possibly a

man may hear that the only way to have his will is to resign up his will unto God. Now that he may have his will he will resign it up unto God : this is but to serve himself of God. But where this work is truly done, it is done with the greatest plainness of heart, and the most sincerity.

As this work is not to be done feignedly, so it is not to be done sinfully, but in well-doing. Some say, "The will of the Lord be done;" and they say they do resign and give up themselves unto God ; but if ye look into 1 Pet. 4. 19. he will tell you, that this work is to be performed in well-doing: "Let him commit his soul to God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." And thus ye see how this work is to be done rightly.

It is to be done solemnly, and not slightly; freely and firstly, not forcedly and lastly; wholly and totally, and not partially and by halves; absolutely, and not conditionally, upon articles; actively, and not in a way of submission only; with much plainness and sincerity; and in well-doing.

Well, but when is this work to be done?

It is to be done daily. Once done, and yet ever doing. But there are some times wherein this work is to be done especially, but most especially at our death.

I say, this work is to be done daily. Sometimes a man is to resign up his will unto God, in reference to his health; sometimes in reference to his outward estate; sometimes in reference to his relations; sometimes in reference to his spiritual condition. But as the Psalmist speaks, "Trust in the Lord at all times;" so I say, we are to resign up selves and souls and will to God at all times.

There are some special times and seasons which do call for this work. I will name five.

When a man doth convert and turn unto God. Then he is in a special manner to resign and give up himself unto God. "What wilt thou have me do?" said Paul at his first conversion. The priests that offered sacrifices unto God, were first offered themselves. After conversion we daily offer our sacrifices to God: at the first, therefore, we are to offer up ourselves unto him.

When a man is called forth unto any great work, or service, or employment, especially if it be beyond his own strength

and power, then he is to resign and give up himself unto God: so Moses did, so David did, so all the worthies of God have ever done, when they have been called out to any great employments.

When a man is in any great danger, distress, and affliction, then he is to resign and give up himself and will unto God. "If the Lord have any pleasure in me (says David) he will bring me back again; yet if not, his will be done." So Joab when he saw that enemies were round about him; "Let us fight, (says he,) for the cities of our God, &c. and the will of the Lord be done."

When a man doth join himself unto the Lord and his people, then he is especially to resign and give up himself unto God. So the churches of Macedonia did; for says Paul, 2 Cor. viii. 5. "And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God."

When a man hath sinned greatly, and wandered from the Lord, and from his holy profession, and doth return again unto God, then he is in a special manner to resign and give up himself unto God. The same thing is to be done in our renewed as in our first conversion. And if ye look into 2 Chron. xxx. ye shall find, that when all Israel had gone astray, Hezekiah exhorting them to return unto the Lord, he saith, verse 8. "Now be ye not stiffnecked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord:" Margin, give you your hand unto God. When we have stolen any thing from God, it is our duty to restore it. Have we therefore in our first conversion given ourselves unto God, and afterward by our sins taken them away again? Whenever we do return unto God, then it is our duty to restore, and so to resign up ourselves unto him. And thus now ye see what those special times and seasons are which call for this work at our hands. The time of conversion calls for it; the time of special employment calls for it; the time of great danger calls for it; the time of joining to the Lord and his people calls for it; and the times of our returns unto God after wanderings call for it.

But though we are to resign ourselves unto God in such times as these are especially, yet most especially we are to do it when we come to suffer; for then God is ready to re-

ceive us, *Exod. xix. 4.* Then men are ready to destroy us "The poor committeth himself to thee:" *Ps. x. 14.* When we come to die, for then did Christ do it especially. Then the soul is to return unto him that gave it. It doth not die or sleep with the body in the grave, but it returns unto him that gave it. "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise," saith Christ. And the apostle tells us, that paradise is the third heavens and the place of glory. Paul saith, "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all." *2 Cor. xii.* How can a man be said to be with Christ presently upon his death, if the soul dies and sleeps with the body? Yea, says he, "I am in a strait;" in respect to you, I desire to live: in respect of myself, I desire to die. But if the soul sleeps and dies with the body, why should not he desire to live in regard of himself? When the man dies, then the soul and spirit returneth to him that gave it. When a man therefore dies, it is fit to resign and give up his soul unto God.

When a man dies, then, if his soul goes to heaven, it is to pass through the enemy's country; for Satan is "the prince of the air." The air is full of devils; the soul therefore hath need of a good convoy to pass through the enemy's country. And how should a man get this convoy, but by resigning and giving up his soul into the hands of God.

When a man dies, then he launches forth into the ocean of eternity; and as God is the disposer of our times for the present, so of our eternity also. Fit it is that we should acknowledge his sovereignty over us, in reference to our eternity: and therefore when a man comes to die, he is in a special manner to resign and give up himself unto God, to be laid out and disposed of to all eternity.

And when a man comes to die, then there is a great parting between the soul and the body; then I part with that which is most dear to me. Now when a man parts with his children, or those things that are dear to him, he will put them into the safest hands that he can; but when we come to die, then is the great parting time. And therefore, then and then especially we are to resign and give up ourselves and our souls unto God. Thus Christ did; "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Well, but how and by what means shall I be able to resign

and give up myself and soul unto God when I die, so as I may receive this *depositum* again to my comfort?

It is good for us to inquire into this matter; we know not how soon we may be called to this dying work. If the candle be newly lighted it may easily be put out, and if it have burned long it will easily go out. It was the desire of Dionysius, that Christ's last word on the cross might be the last word of his life.* Do you, therefore, desire to close up your life with this gracious resignation according to Christ's example? Then,

Be sure that you do not give away your soul from God to any thing else whilst you live. If you have given away your soul unto other things whilst you live, it will be a vain thing for you to say Christ's words when you come to die. When men come to their death, ye know they do ordinarily make their wills; and in the first place they say, I give my soul unto God; then if they have lands, or houses, or money, they give them to their wives, children, relations and friends, according to their pleasure. But suppose, now, that a man shall give land or house to such or such a child or friend, which he hath sold or given away before, shall his will stand in force? Will not all men say, This he could not give away, for he had sold that or given that before? So in regard of one's soul; though upon my death I say, As for my soul, I give that to God; yet if I have sold away my soul before, for unjust gain, or have given away my soul before unto filthy pleasures, how can I resign and give that to God when I die; will not the Lord say, Nay, this is none of your's to give, this you had sold or given away before? Oh, then, be sure of this, that whilst you live, you do not sell or give away your soul from God, for then death-bed resignation will be but as the act and deed of a man that makes his will when he is not *compos mentis*.

If you would so resign your soul unto God when you die, that you may receive this *depositum* again with comfort; then be sure that you make God your friend whilst you live, else what repose can you put on him when you die. Who doth trust a jewel in the hands of a stranger or enemy? We read, Judges x. 14, when the children of Israel had forsaken the

* Domine, fac ut ultimum tuum verbum in cruce, sit etiam ultimum meum verbum in hoc luce.—Gerard. ex Dionys. Harm. cap. xvii.

Lord, and served other gods, that when they cried to the Lord to save them out of the hands of their enemies, the Lord said unto them, "Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen, and let them save you in the time of your tribulation." So will the Lord say to us, if in the time of our health we follow after our pleasures and profits and our old sins, "Go and cry to the gods whom ye have served;" go and repose your souls in their hands, and let them help you now if they can. No man will repose or commit that which he prizeth into the hands of a stranger or enemy. Oh, then, whilst we have our health and life let us make God our friend.

And not only so, but get an assurance that God is your friend and Father: though God be our friend, if we do not know it, how shall we commit our souls to him when we die. Paul said, "I know whom I have trusted, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him unto that day." It is an hard thing for a doubting heart that cannot say, Father, distinctly, to resign as Christ did. Why then should you live upon hopes mingled with uncertainties; is it not yet time to get your assurance? Oh, labour more and more to attain to these rises of assurance; for the more assurance you have when you come to die, the more easily and truly you will say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

And if you would resign up your soul unto the hands of God, so as you may receive that *depositum* again with comfort; then observe what that *depositum* is which God doth now trust you with, and be you faithful in the keeping thereof. When Christ went away, he left us a *depositum*, he did leave and deposit some of his things in our hands; his truths, his ordinances, his talents; and if I do not keep his trust, his truths, his ordinances, his talents, how can I expect that he should keep my soul for me? Mark how these go together. "I know whom I have trusted," says Paul, "and I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him," 2 Tim. i. 12. Then ver. 14, "That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep." As if he should say, As we desire that he should keep our trust, so we must keep his trust. Some things the Lord hath committed to us; some things we commit to him. Now, therefore, as you do desire that he may keep your souls for you,

so do you keep his truths, his ordinances, and whatever he hath committed unto you.

And if you would be able to do this work of soul-resignation in the day of your death rightly, then use yourself to do it every day. That is easily done which is often done. And if you look upon the example of Christ, ye shall find, that as soon as he drew near to the cross, the first thing he did was to resign up his will unto God, being in his agony in the garden. "If it be possible (saith he) let this cup pass; yet not my will, but thy will be done." And the last thing he did, was to resign up his soul unto God. This affliction was begun and ended with holy resignation. It is begun with a resignation of his will, it is ended with a resignation of his soul. So should all our afflictions be begun and ended with self-resignation; and if I can but begin my affliction with the resignation of my will unto the will of God, I shall end the affliction with the resignation of my soul into the hands of God. And the more frequently I do it whilst I live, the more easily I shall do it when I die, and say in truth with Christ, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Study the sovereignty of God. The more your heart is possessed with God's sovereignty, the more resignation. "It is the Lord," said Eli, "let him do what seemeth good," 1 Sam. iii. 18. And, "Good is the word of the Lord," said Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx. 19.

Then behold this example of Christ, being before you: "Whom beholding," &c. The sight of a resigning Christ, will make you resign and say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

And thus now I have done with this last speech of Christ on the cross. The words of dying friends are precious, and we remember them. Now ye have heard this living saying of a dying Christ. You that are the friends of Christ will remember them; and the Lord teach us so to remember them, that thereby we may learn both to live and to die, both to do and to suffer.

SERMON VIII.

THE DIGNITY AND DUTY OF GOD'S CALLED ONES.

“That you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.”—1 THESS. II. 12.

IN this chapter you have a relation of the apostle Paul's entrance unto the Thessalonians, how they received him, and how he preached to them. “For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: but even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully intreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention,” ver. 1, 2. It was with much sincerity that he preached: “Our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile,” ver. 3. In opposition to worldly interests: “Not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, nor a cloke of covetousness; nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ,” ver. 4, 5, 6. It was with all gentleness and love: “We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us,” ver. 7, 8. It was with much industry and labour: “Labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable to any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God,” ver. 9. It was with all holiness of conversation: “Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe,” ver. 10. With all manner of exhortation: “As ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that you would walk worthy of God,” ver. 11. So here then you have the matter exhorted to, and the motive pressing thereto: “Who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.” Or, here you have,

The person calling: “God.”

The dignity called unto: “Who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.”

The duty that flows from thence: “That you would walk

worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.”

Hence observe, That it is the duty of all who are called to God’s kingdom and glory, to walk worthy of the kingdom and glory of God. I shall therefore shew you,

First, What this vocation or calling is; and that there is that in it, that may and should provoke us to walk worthy of God.

Secondly, That when God brings home any man to himself, he doth it in a way of calling; and why so?

Thirdly. That it is the duty of all that are called, to walk worthy of God.

Fourthly, How a man shall know that he is truly called.

Fifthly, What we should do, that we may walk worthy of God who hath called us.

First, This vocation is an act of God’s grace and mercy, whereby we are invited to the great supper of the gospel, to communion and fellowship with Christ. As it is an act of God’s grace and mercy, so it is opposed to works. “For the children being yet unborn, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth,” Rom. ix. 11. Calling is opposite to works. So 2 Tim. i. 9, “Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace,” &c. Vocation is an act of God’s grace wholly.

Men are invited to the great supper of the gospel; that is, to fellowship and communion with Christ. “God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,” 1 Cor. i. 9.

If you look unto the persons that are invited to the great supper; Luke xiv. 16; Matt. xxii. 1, 2, 3, [that great supper is nothing but communion and fellowship with Christ] those that are invited, Matt. xxii. 3. are said to be called. “He sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the supper.” And of those that refused to come, it is said, “Many are called, but few are chosen,” ver. 14.

Only this invitation to communion and fellowship with Christ, is to be considered two ways. Merely and barely, as it is an act of God inviting by the word; or as it implies our answer or consent to that invitation. As when a man is

called to an office either in church or state, he is said to be called, though he does not accept of it; but when election and voluntary acceptance meet together, then there is a call. So our heavenly call, taking it in a large sense: all that live under the gospel are called, and invited. But in a proper and strict sense, men are said to be called only, when they accept, and consent upon Gods invitation. This distinction is very necessary: for Matt. xxii. 14, it is said, many are called, but few are chosen. And Rom. viii. 30, it is said expressly "That whom he hath predestinated, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified." If those that are called, are predestinated and justified, how is it true, "That many are called, and few are chosen?" I answer, taking calling in a large sense, for a bare invitation, many are called. Taking calling in a strict sense, as implying our answer, and acceptance, and consent thereto, so none are called but those that accept the call, and are brought home to God. God's calling is an effectual invitation of a person to the great snpper of the gospel, whereby a man does accept it, and is brought home to God.

Secondly. How does it appear, that when God brings home a man to himself, he does it in a way of calling; and why so? I answer, if our conversion be called our calling, and the saints are described by their calling, the thing is true; "Make your calling and election sure," 2 Pet. i. 10, that is your conversion. Rom. i. 6, 7. "Among whom also are ye called of God. Called to be saints." So 1 Cor. i. 2, Saints by calling. If the saints and people of God be described by, the called ones, and our conversion be termed our calling, then when God brings home a man to himself, he does it in a way of calling.

Because those that God brings home to himself, are afar off. We call men that are afar off: if they be near, we speak to them. By nature we are afar off from God; therefore when he converts men, he is said to call. Acts ii. 14, 39; "Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said to them, Ye men of Judea, &c. hearken to my words. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many the Lord our God shall call." Called upon this account, because ye are afar off.

Is it not necessary, that we should be conformed to Christ our Head, and to Abraham our father, “the father of the faithful?” You shall find Abraham was called, Isa. li. 2, “Look unto Abraham your father, &c. for I called him alone.” Christ is also said to be called in a way suitable to him, Matt. ii. 15, “Out of Egypt have I called my son.” Heb. v. 4, “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron.” Isa. iv. 26, “I the Lord have called thee in righteousness,” &c. Isa. xlix. 1, “Listen, O isles unto me, &c. the Lord hath called me from the womb.” We are to be conformable to Christ our Head, and to Abraham our father, in our calling.

If God shall bring a man home to himself, according to the practice of men, he must bring him home in a way of calling: “I drew them with the cords of a man,” Hos. xi. 4. When God deals with man, it is in a way suitable to man: but why, when he brings a man home to himself, will he do it in a way of calling, when as he might do it immediately by his own infinite power? If I knew that a man would not accept my invitation to dinner, I would never send to invite him. God knows that every one will not come, what need he then stand calling and inviting? We must consider, that as God will deal with man in the way, and according to the manner of men; so he will deal with man also in the way of God too. Christ is God-man, God manifested in the flesh. 1 Tim. iii. 6. Because the work of our redemption was to be carried on by the hand of God, and by the hand of man both. Whereas should God deal with man only as God, then he would convert him presently by his own infinite power, and never make any invitation to him: and if he should deal with man only as man, he would never invite any of the dead: for who is there of you that will send to the grave, and invite a dead man to your table? But as God, he invites dead ones. There are some that think Christ need not to invite, because he can bring men home to himself by his own almighty power: but such do forget that the Deity works as a man. Others think men are to be converted only by moral suasions and persuasions; such do forget that Christ works as God too. But Christ is God-man; because the great work of our redemption and salvation, is to be carried on by the

hand of both. As God, he does invite and call irresistibly, omnipotently; as man, he invites by persuasion; as God-man, he invites, and gives a heart to accept of his invitation.

If all those blessings and mercies we are called to, are called God's blessings and mercies, (as so they are, "Who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light," 1 Peter ii. 9, "who hath called us to his kingdom and glory,") it were presumption in me to meddle with the things of God, with "the things that are God's," if he did not invite me to it; but if a beggar comes to your house, and shall sit down at your table, he does not presume, because you have invited him. God will have his people know, that they do not presume when they come at his invitation, and call and meddle with the things of God.

If all the work of christianity be bestrewed with difficulty, and affliction, we had need be called thereunto, for in the time of affliction or difficulty, what shall bear up our heart, and carry us through, but God's call? God's call is our warrant, and our strength; therefore fit that all that are brought home to God, it should be in a way of calling.

Thirdly, What is the duty, then, of all that are called to God's kingdom and glory?

I answer, It is their duty to walk worthy of God. By worthy is not meant a worthiness of merit. No; there is a four-fold worthiness mentioned in Scripture.

1. In regard of merit; so only Christ is worthy. "For thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals," Rev. v. 9.

2. In regard of acceptation; so the saints are worthy. "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy," Rev. iii. 4.

3. In regard of proportion; so "Our present afflictions are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed," 2 Cor. iv. 17. That is, there is no proportion between the glory of heaven, and the afflictions we meet with here below.

4. In regard of meetness, suitableness, and fitness. "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance," Matt. iii. 8. And thus it is the duty of all that are called, to walk worthy of God, &c.

Because dignity calls for duty; and the more dignity, the more duty: what greater dignity than to be called to God's kingdom and glory?

The more sad and dismal any man's condition is, the more he is obliged, and engaged, and bound to God, to walk worthy and answerably to God who hath called him out of that condition. The condition we are called out of, is a condition of great darkness; for that is great darkness a man is in, which he cannot rise out of, nor lie still in. This is our condition; we can neither rise out of it of ourselves, nor lie still in it. "Therefore arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," Eph. v. 14.

The more comfortable and glorious the condition is that a man is called unto, the more he is engaged to God, who hath called him to that condition. What is good in all the world, or desirable, but we are called to it, in this being "called to his kingdom and glory?" Is light desirable? We are "called out of darkness into his marvellous light." Is holiness desirable? "God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness," 1 Thess. iv. 7. Is peace desirable? We are called to peace, 1 Cor. vii. 5. Is communion and fellowship with Christ desirable? We are called to that, 1 Cor. i. 9, "God is faithful by whom ye are called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Is the kingdom of God and his glory desirable? The text says, "We are called to his kingdom and glory." What is desirable, that by our vocation we are not called unto.

But may not these be lost? No.

The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. The gifts of the creation was not without repentance. "God repented that he had made man," Gen. vi. 6. But the gift of effectual calling is without repentance; therefore the more obliged to God for calling; and therefore our duty to walk worthy of our calling.

The more dangerous it is to refuse the call of God, the more mercy it is to be called, and the more obliged we are to walk worthy of God who hath so called us. Prov. i. 24, "Because I called, and ye refused, I will also laugh at your calamity," &c. But that I would have you consider, in Matt. xxii. 1. If you mark the parable, you will find three threes run parallel one with another. Three invitations, verse 3, "He sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden" to the wedding feast formerly. Then, verse 4, there is the third invitation: "Again he sent forth other servants,

saying, Tell them which are bidden, behold, I have prepared my dinner, &c., all things are ready, come to the marriage." Three refusals run parallel with these three invitations: at verse 3, they that were bidden formerly, at the second time of the servants being sent to call them, would not come. And again, verse 4, "He sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, behold all things are ready, come to the marriage; but they made light of it." Verse 5, there is the third invitation, "And the remnant took his servants, and intreated them spitefully, and slew them," verse 6. Observe three judgments run parallel with these three refusals, Luke xiv. 24, for it is one and the same parable. In Matt. xxii. 8, it is said, "That when the king heard thereof, he was wroth," and said, "The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy." And, in Luke, "I say unto you, (says he) not one of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper." And verse 7, "The king sent forth his armies (there is a second judgment) and destroyed these murtherers, and burnt up their city;" that was a third judgment. What a dangerous thing is it to refuse God's calling and invitation. It is a great mercy to be kept from refusing; and therefore if God calls, and gives us a heart to accept it, it is our duty to walk worthy of his calling, worthy of God. Therefore,

Fourthly, When may a man be said to be called; and how shall I know if I be truly called or no?

Those that do not live under a gospel ministry, nor never did, were never called; for God does ordinarily call men by preaching of the word. But though men do live under the means of grace, if they have not a disposition suitable, they are not called effectually, though called outwardly. They have not the wedding garment; for what is the wedding garment? A call to the wedding supper, to communion with Christ in the gospel, and a disposition suitable to accept the call; so that I shall know that I am effectually called.

If the Lord hath put forth an infinite and an almighty power upon my soul, constraining me to turn from my sins to God. Do they that are called refuse? "Go out into the highways and hedges," says the Lord, "and compel them to come in," Luke xiv. 23. When a man can say, "The love

of Christ constrains me ;” I can do nothing against Christ, but for Christ ; they are effectually called.

If you are begotten by the word of promise, then you are called effectually. “In Isaac shall thy seed be called,” Rom. ix. 7. How was Isaac begotten? Not in a way of nature, but “by a word of promise,” verse 8.

If you be separated from the world indeed, from the things and persons of the world. 1 Pet. ii. 9, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, an holy nation, that ye should shew forth the praises of him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

If there be in you an aptness, a readiness, and a willingness to be ruled by the word in all things, then are you effectually called. So when Cornelius was called, and Peter came to preach to him, Acts x. 29, “We are all present (says he to Peter) to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” And so when Paul was called, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” says he, Acts ix. 6.

If you can say in truth, that all things work together for your good, then are you indeed “called according to his purpose,” Rom. viii. 28. Not to them that are called outwardly, but to them that are called according to his purpose, effectually and truly, do all things work together for good. Can you say, I was under such and such an affliction or temptation, and it wrought together for my good ; and under such a desertion, and it wrought for my spiritual good? Then you are called truly according to his purpose.

If you hold forth the praises of him that hath called you, then are you called truly and effectually ; for why are you called, but “that you should shew forth the praises and virtues of him that hath called you?” 1 Peter ii. 9.

If any shall complain, I fear I am not effectually called, because I was first wrought upon by afflictions ; those that are truly called, I find are called by the servants, by the preachers of the gospel ;

To this I answer : It is true that God does ordinarily call men effectually by his ministers, who are the servants he sends forth ; but remember also it is said. “He sent forth other servants to tell them which were bidden, all things are ready, come to the marriage,” Matt. xxii. 4. Christ has other servants than these his ministers ; though ordinarily

those he truly and effectually calls, it is by these. But he sends other servants too; he can give commission to an affliction to bring home souls to himself. What think you of the prodigal? Luke xv. Was not he brought home to his father by an affliction? Was not Naaman brought home to God by his leprosy? You will say perhaps, These were providentially, occasionally. But what say you then to Zaccheus? Was it not a kind of accidental, providential call that he had? And that Christ should call Matthew as he passed by, and saw him sit at the receipt of custom? Waldus, the father of the Waldenses, he and a company of his friends had supped together, and been merry; and as they were returning home, one of them fell down dead in the street. This was an occasional means of his conversion, who was so famous a man, and an instrument of converting so many thousands to the true religion. But shall the prodigal say, I fear my conversion is not right, because affliction led me first home to my father? Shall Zaccheus say, It was but an accidental thing that I ran up into the sycamore tree, being low of stature, and so could not else have seen Jesus for the press, whom I desired only out of curiosity to see, and therefore I fear my call was not right? God knows how to make use of contingencies, occasional providences, and of your afflictions, to bring you home to himself. And if you be brought home to God by the hand and ministry of affliction, that you can say as one did, If my parents had not been undone, I had been undone for ever; be content then with affliction, and love it the better. Usually persons have the greatest love for that minister that was the first instrument of their conversion.

Again, If any shall say, I fear I am not truly nor effectually called, because I do not know the time when I was so called; there being some that can tell you the very time, and the sermon, and the particular word in the sermon, that was effectual to their conversion; but I can give no account of any of these,

I answer, The sun when it comes into a room where the windows have no shutters, comes in by degrees; but it comes into a room where the windows have shutters all at once. Where there are the shutters of profaneness, drunkenness, uncleanness, and the like, when such men are

wrought upon, the sun comes in all at once. Those that are born of godly parents, and have been educated and trained up in a godly, religious way, they are converted; but many times they cannot tell you neither the particular minister, nor the word, nor the time when converting grace came in upon their souls; it came in by degrees; shall such say therefore they are not truly converted? Suppose a man had had the stone, but had got a powder, in the use of which the stone does wear out by degrees, shall that man say, I never had the stone, because many that are cured of the stone, it has been by cutting, and with a great deal of pain which I escaped, and therefore I never had the stone? So shall I, because I have not had those terrors and troubles of conscience that others have felt, argue therefore I am not converted? No, but go and bless God that you are converted; that the stone is wrought out of your heart in a more kindly and gentle way than in others. I say, What shall I do that I may walk worthy of God, who hath effectually called me, and in so sweet and gentle a way?

Fifthly, What shall I do, that I may walk worthy of God that hath called me, since certainly called I am. I am either called outwardly only, or effectually. If a man invites me to dinner, and I do not go, I am yet to carry it answerably to his love, in inviting me: much more, when the Lord has called me, and that effectually, it is my duty to walk worthy of God who hath thus called me. I am come into a great and open field, through all these precedent gates, I may proceed to further particulars hereafter, at present only remember, that a man is said to walk worthy of God, when he walks meetly, suitably, and answerably to that God hath called him. There are four expressions bishop Davenant hath in his notes upon the epistle to the Colossians, that run into this same matter. Sometimes a man is said to walk worthy of God; sometimes of the Lord Christ; sometimes of the gospel; sometimes of the high calling whereunto he is called. But that I may speak clearly to the point, I shall begin with the first of these, and shew you how a man shall "walk worthy of God that hath called him to his kingdom and glory," that is, suitably and answerably.

Observe the attributes and excellencies of God, and let them shine forth in you, that shine forth in him. God is a

great God; and if you will walk worthy of this great God, you must do some great thing for him. Solomon when he would build a temple for God, said, "It must be exceeding magnificent, for it was for the great God." It is no great thing to believe, love, and pray, and give alms to the poor; but it is a great thing to believe in the face of impossibilities. To love over the head of injuries; to pray when one's heart is dead and down; to give alms to the poor out of but a mite or two, as the widow did; and it is said, "She gave more than all the rest." It is no great matter, says one, for a man to do great things; but to do great things, and to think himself nothing; this is a great matter. If you will walk worthy of God, do some great thing for God.

As God is a great God; so he is a sovereign Lord, absolutely free, and is determined by nothing from without, but himself, but only of his own counsels; therefore if you will walk worthy of God, what is the thing wherein his good pleasure lies? Labour to know that: and not only to do the thing he commands; but serve the good pleasure of God. Be ye more gracious, because God is so freely gracious.

God is infinitely holy, therefore it is not said, almighty, almighty, almighty, not great, great, great, but, holy, holy, holy; because God looks upon holiness as his greatest excellency: so must you, if you will walk worthy of God, "and be holy as he is holy, in all manner of conversation," 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

He is a God all-sufficient, "I am God all-sufficient, walk before me, and be upright," Gen. xvii. You give him the honour of his all-sufficiency, in being upright. When you step out from God, to fetch relief some where else, you dishonour God: "Is it because there is no God in Israel, that you go out to the god of Ekron?"

He is a faithful God. His faithfulness is twice repeated. "Faithful is he that hath called you," 1 Thess. v. 24, "God is faithful by whom you were called," 1 Cor. i. 9. Then would you walk worthy of God who hath called you; whenever God makes a promise, promise yourself that thing, because God hath promised it; not because the creature promiseth it, being big and full of second causes; but when God promiseth, assure yourself of it, because God hath promised it. This is to walk worthy of God, as he is faithful.

He is our chief good, and our utmost end, and therefore in all your affairs you are to begin with him, and to rest in him, and to be boundless and insatiable in your desires after him. A worldly man makes the world his end, and therefore is insatiable; thinks he never has enough of it, because he makes it his utmost end.

If you would walk worthy of God, &c. Observe what the great design of God is in the world, and labour all you can to advance the same: the great design of God in the world, is to glorify himself in his Son. Now when a man does pray to God, and Christ shall do the thing for him, that he prays for; then the Father is glorified in the Son. "Whatever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son," John xiv. 13. And when a man does hear Christ, and believe in Christ, and obey Christ, as sent of the Father; then he glorifies God the Father in the Son.

In case you have any work to do, first go to God before you try other means; it is no great honour to God to come to him in the last place, when you have no whither else to go, and to trust God when you can trust none else. But to believe in the face of impossibility, and to love over the head of injury, and to pray when all is dead and down; this is worthy of God.

Observe what that is that hath been your god, and give that to God. Bishop Babington, who was a good man in his time observes, that the children of Israel did sacrifice to God that which was the gods of other nations; and herein they honoured God. If you can give that to God which hath been your god; consider God the Father gave that to you that was dearest to him. If you give him that which is dearest to you, which you have made your god; this is a thing worthy of God "who hath called you to his kingdom and glory."

Take heed of sinning in secret, because God sees you; and be sure you be much in private duty, for God beholds you. The more I walk in the eye of an all-seeing God, the more I walk worthy of God.

In case you do or have received any mercy from God, be not only thankful upon account of a benefit, but praise God. There is a great deal of difference between thankfulness and praise. I am thankful to God for a benefit, but I praise him for that excellency of God which shines forth in that benefit.

Let there be always something of God stamped upon all that you do, suffer, or enjoy. Do you think that a naked profession is worthy of God; that to pray morning and evening, and never think of God all the day after, is worthy of God? No, but if you will walk worthy of God, something of God should be stamped upon all your doings, sufferings, company, converses and enjoyments. How is it with you as to what you have heard? Observe yourselves; would you walk worthy of God? You have heard it is the duty of all that are called to his kingdom and glory; but, Lord, how few are there that walk worthy of God, of the gospel, of Christ, of that high calling whereunto they are called! Are there not some among us that sit under the gospel, that in point of righteousness live beneath heathens; that walk contrary to their profession? Is this to walk worthy of God? Are there not some of us that at the best walk in a legal way, as under a covenant of works? Either you are called effectually or you are not; called you are, outwardly, all of you that live under the gospel. If you be not called effectually, the time will come when you will have this dreadful question put to you, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" not having a gospel disposition suitable to a gospel dispensation. If you be called effectually, you are called to a kingdom, and faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it. "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel, worthy of him who hath called you to his kingdom and glory."