

AGAINST ANXIOUS CAREFULNESS.

Be careful for nothing.—PHILIPPIANS IV. 6.

THE beginning of the chapter consists of many exhortations. This is one now read. It has little dependence upon the former, that is obvious, unless with the two next before it, ver. 4, 'Rejoice in the Lord always.' Those that have interest in Christ ought to rejoice, and do so always in every condition; not only when their outward state is plentiful, and flourishing, and prosperous, but when it is like that of this apostle and the Philippians, low and afflicted, beset on every side with dangers, and exposed to all sorts of outward sufferings. They have cause for this joy always, because it is a rejoicing in God, who is an object that affords constant and continual occasion of rejoicing. If the world, or the most pleasing things in it, had been the object of their joy, it had been unreasonable here to have called for a constant rejoicing, it had been impossible to comply with it; the matter will not bear it, the world cannot, will not afford constant occasion for it. It is a variable and inconstant thing, and so are all the enjoyments of it; if we have them now, they will be gone ere long, or the comfort of them may vanish; if they please and delight us now, they may afflict and trouble us shortly, and bring us sorrow enough to dash all our worldly joy. But God is the same always, he varies not with the changes of the world, but is as delightful and joyous an object in affliction as in prosperity; we always find occasion of rejoicing in him, and therefore we may, we ought, to rejoice in him always. And that they may thus rejoice in the Lord, he advises them, ver. 5, to carry themselves moderately towards outward things; not to be much taken with them when they seem most pleasing, nor to be much troubled at them when they seem most afflictive; not to be much exalted when the world favours us, nor dejected when it frowns and crosses us; but to keep a temper, and avoid extremes, either of which damp or disturb spiritual joy. Το ἰσχυεῖς seems to denote an equal carriage towards the world, an even passage through it, an indifferency towards the things thereof, whatever they be; as those who have their eye so much upon God, and so taken up with him, as to be little concerned in outward things, and the little circumstances of this life. The Lord is ἰσχυός; can you be much taken with sensible things when the Lord is so near you? Can you see any object so lovely, so desirable, so delightful as he? Or if afflictions and sufferings be near, your condition troublesome, or persecutors powerful and

violent, yet the Lord is near, a very present comfort, a very present help in such a time ; he is at hand, ready to secure, or support, or refresh, or deliver ; to make you gainers, rejoicers, more than conquerors ; and therefore trouble not yourselves, be not careful or solicitous, only make your case known to him, that is all you have to do. He will take care of you and all your concerns, you need not be anxious about anything, ver. 6.

Obs. The people of Christ should be careful for nothing, *μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε*, care for nothing, be not solicitously, anxiously careful for anything. As they need not, so they ought not give way to those cares which haunt and take up the minds of others. It is both their duty, and their privilege, and happiness. Indeed, there is little or nothing which the Lord requires of us but tends to our happiness. He shews not only his sovereign authority, but his infinite goodness, in those things which he enjoins us ; and leaves us self-condemned and inexcusable if we comply not with his will, since it is his design, not only to have us shew our subjection, but to make us happy. All his commands tend thereto, and most of them (and this amongst the rest) directly and evidently, as will appear in the sequel.

For explication, let me inquire a little into the act and the object ; what we are not to be careful for, and what it is to be careful.

1. For the former. The expression seems universal, but must be understood with that restraint which the Scripture elsewhere directs us to. *Nothing* here respects especially the concerns of this present life, the things of the world and of time. These are they about which we are in danger to take too much care ; the concerns of our souls, the things of heaven and eternity, we are apt to be too careless and regardless of. The Lord uses a spur here ; we need quickening, and are in danger to be too remiss, both as to the end and the means. The Lord calls upon us to take care of both, and we are to hearken to him accordingly, Deut. xv. 5, Luke x. 40, Titus iii. 8. Both the end and the way should be minded with great care ; he excites and stirs us up to this ; but where we are in danger to be too careful, there he uses a curb ; and this is about the things of this life, for these he would have us not careful. These are the things intended in the text, and other expressions in Scripture point at them. What we are in danger of, what we are restrained from, is the cares sometimes of this world : Mat. xiii. 22, *μέριμνα τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου* ; and Mark iv. 19, *μέριμναι*, &c., sometimes of this life ; Luke xxi. 34, *μέριμναι βιωτικαί*, the things which concern this life while we are in this world, earthly and temporal things, which are of no longer continuance nor further concernment than our present life. Nothing of this nature should be our care, we are not to be careful about any such thing. Particularly, we should not be careful about, (1.) getting and providing them when we want them, or have them not in such a measure and degree as we desire. Our Lord Jesus, in that excellent sermon which he made in the mount, insists most upon this ; he stays not so long upon any other particular, and presses it with much force and variety of argument ; Mat. vi. 25, 31, 34, where the word rendered, 'take no thought,' is the same all along which the apostle here uses, *μὴ μεριμνᾶτε*, be not careful, *μὴ μεριμνήσετε*, ye shall not be careful, either for plenty and superfluities, or for necessities, food and raiment ; there is no cause, no reason for carefulness to get either, as he argues admirably, and to the conviction of the duller understanding, and the most distrustful heart.

(2.) About keeping, ordering, or securing them. Martha was too solicitous and careful in ordering the affairs of the family. Christ checks her for it, Luke x. 40. The rich man was careful how to keep his stores ; he is branded as a fool for his pains, Luke xii. 17, 20, *διελογίζετο ἐν ἑαυτῷ*, he

reasoned carefully, &c. We should not be solicitous and careful how to avoid losses and troubles, how to prevent or escape sufferings in our persons or outward concerns. The apostle in the text probably has a particular respect to this. The condition of the Philippians, exposed to dangers and sufferings, might make them subject to carefulness, how they should secure themselves and what they had. And so he thought it seasonable to mind them of their duty, to be careful for no such thing. The way of man, the way of flesh and blood, is to take much care in such a case. The way of God lies elsewhere; make your case known to him, and be at rest.

(8.) About deliverance when losses have surprised us, and troubles and sufferings are upon us. When this befalls us, a burden of cares is ready to fall upon us, we are apt to pull it upon ourselves. The Lord would not have us careful about this, he has better provided for us, Ps. lv. 22; and thus did the three faithful Jews ease themselves of that which would have oppressed others, Dan. iii. 16.

But are we to be altogether careless and regardless of the enjoyments or sufferings of this life, and have no more regard of them than Gallio had of the Jews' concerns? Must we 'care for none of these things'? Must we be neglectful of them, as the disciples thought that Christ might be, when in their danger they say to him, Mark iv. 38, 'Master, carest thou not that we perish?'

2. No, do not mistake; there is some care that is allowed, yea, enjoined and required, about these things, and there is a carefulness which is forbidden and condemned; and what the one and the other is, we are now to inquire. It was the second thing propounded for explication of this truth and the understanding of our duty; about the act, what it is to be careful in the apostle's sense, when he forbids it. And herein I shall proceed, (1.) negatively, (2.) positively. He does not prohibit all kind and degree of carefulness about the concerns of this life. There is a care which is lawful and necessary, of which take account in these severals:—

(1.) We may take notice of our outward condition, and the concerns thereof; we may make use of our judgment and reason, and employ and exercise them in discerning what our circumstances are, yea, and what they are like to be, Prov. xxii. 8, and xxvii. 12. It is part of Ephraim's censure, Hos. vii. 9, 'Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not,' &c. We may and ought to mind and observe what we have, and want, what we have lost or are like to lose when trouble is near, and what we are in danger to suffer. These, and the like, we are to mind and consider, or else we are like to neglect those duties which depend upon the notice and consideration hereof, and which the Lord has suited to the several postures of our outward state. We shall not spiritually improve what is present; and all these things being under changes, we are like to be surprised and found unprepared for what comes next. What care a prudent observation hereof includes, is lawful and necessary, Prov. xxvii. 28.

(2.) We may have some thoughts about these outward things. Care is the exercise or employment of our thoughts about this or that, including the same motions which they have upon our other faculties; and some thoughts about these things are needful, and so some care. We may be reasoning, and advising, and thinking in ourselves of our enjoyments, how they may be duly preserved and well employed; of our wants, how they may be regularly supplied; of our dangers, troubles, sufferings, how they may be lawfully avoided, or patiently endured, or fruitfully improved, or seasonably removed. The apostle censures those who are careless in one of these cases, by which we may conclude of the rest, 1 Tim. v. 8, if any one, *οὐ μεριμνᾷ τὰν ἰδίων*,

have not some provident care of his own concerns, as to outward things, he is far from being faithful.

(8.) We may have some sense of our external condition, such as may reach our hearts, and some way affect them, make some impression on them : in a temperate fear or hope, joy or grief, such as arises from the due and moderate employment of our thoughts about the things of this life. The apostle allows this, only bounds it, as the nature of these things requires, 1 Cor. vii. 30. And he would not have us insensible of afflictions, as those who have little or no regard of the hand of God therein, Heb. xii. 5, neither too great a sense, so as to faint under it ; nor too little sense, so as to have little or no regard or care, which *ἀλγυστή*, the word there used, signifies.

(4.) We may use lawful means (so we do it lawfully, for measure, manner, and end) about these outward things, to preserve or procure the comforts of this life ; to prevent danger, to keep off sufferings, or to be delivered out of them, we may have so much care, as will make us delight in such use of means. The Lord encourages it : Prov. xxi., 5 ‘ The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness.’

It is not all care, you see, that is forbidden ; what is it then ?

2. Positively. It is an excess of care. It is carefulness, an inordinacy therein. Which, what it is, and how it may be discerned, I shall endeavour to shew. The former in these particulars.

(1.) When they are too many. The mind is full of them, when not only some care, but carefulness ; some thoughts, but thoughtfulness ; a fulness of solicitous thoughts, and thoughtful cares ; when the mind is wholly or near wholly taken up with them, and little or no room left for better, more needful, more profitable, more refreshing thoughts, those of higher and greater concernment ; when more than are needful on any account, more than the condition of those things requires, or the quality of them deserves. If we would take our measures by the worth and value of these earthly things, a little care, a few thoughts, should serve their turn ; they are of little moment, and of little continuance, and of small advantage or disadvantage, in comparison of that which should be our care indeed, and ought to be the main subject of our thoughts. Our minds are of a better temper, and were made for higher and nobler purposes, than to spend themselves upon such low and little matters, and to spin out their strength and spirits in care and thoughtfulness about them ; there is an excess in giving way so much, and to so many of them ; it is culpable and forbidden carefulness.

(2.) When they are tumultuous, and put the soul all into a hurry, and hale it into confusion and disorder. That is the import of the word *ρυγχάζη*, whereby Martha's carefulness is set out, Luke x. 41. *μεριμνήεις και ρυγχάζησιν περι πολλά*. When the thoughts about these things are not only too many, but like a confused multitude in a throng or crowd, where each one pushes, and troubles, and hinders one another, one can do nothing else when he is in it, and cannot easily get out. When they disorder, and disturb, and decompose the soul, and render it unfit for its proper work, though of greatest importance. When they put the soul into a commotion, and make it like the restless and troubled sea, or a vessel without anchor in a storm. A word of that import is used by Christ, when he is dissuading from this carefulness, Luke xii. 29, *μή μεριμνήετε*. Let not your minds be tossed with these careful thoughts, like a ship at drift with the unruly waves. These are thoughts excessively careful, which disquiet and unsettle the mind, and like so many billows keep it in a tossing and restless agitation.

(8.) When they are perplexing and vexatious, when they in any degree reach the mind, and distend it, as is were, upon tenters ; when they divide

and rend it, as *μήμνη* denotes, the word, by which excessive care is so often expressed in Scripture. When the mind is anxious, and the heart thereupon in some pain and anguish, and sadder impressions made thereon than these outward things, however they go, can be any just ground or occasion of in those who make account their portion is not in this life, nor any part of their true happiness in things below.

2. In the next place, let me shew you how we may discern when our cares are excessive and inordinate, that we may the better know what are forbidden, and what we are concerned to avoid, and also wherein we have been guilty; that we may both bewail what is past, and be more effectually watchful for the future. We may be sure our care about the things of this life is excessive, and that is a condemned carefulness;—

(1.) When it is more for earth than heaven, more for the outward man and its concerns than for the soul; more for things of time, than those that are eternal. Opposites illustrate one another; and it is in opposition to this forbidden carefulness for outward things that our Lord Jesus gives that rule, Mat. vi. 33. Let this be your first, and chief, and great care; leave the care of the other to God. When this is not first, the other is before, or near it; and it is excessive indeed when it is either, when not much before or after it; when more careful to make sure of a good temporal estate, than to make our calling and election sure, very solicitous about a good title to earthly possessions, but take less care about a title to heaven, and interest in Christ.

More to thrive in the world, and increase in riches, than to grow in grace, or to get holiness planted and increased, and to get possession of more heavenly treasure. Very thoughtful about that, but more indifferent here. Careful of outward health, but more regardless of soul distempers and inward diseases, such as bring it to the gates of death. Curious in trimming and adorning the body (a little better-coloured clay); spend an hour or more, some days upon that; but take less care, and spend less time in ordering the soul, cleansing that from all filthiness, and putting it into a dress and posture fit to meet with God, even when approaching him in a solemn manner. When more careful to avoid sufferings than sin, and to keep out of outward danger than to keep out of temptation, and to secure our estates from wasting and decays than our souls from declinings and backslidings, and to be delivered from troubles and afflictions, than to be freed from selfish, carnal, and worldly lusts. This is a carefulness not only condemned, but such as to the greatest part of the world, yea, of those who live under the gospel, is actually damning.

(2.) When it hinders us from enjoying what we have; when so thoughtful to get more, or to keep what we have, or to secure it and ourselves from danger and trouble, will not let us enjoy with quiet and comfort what we have in possession. He is not like to rest quietly, who, when he composeth himself to it, has one that is still jogging, or haling him, or making a noise in his ears. When our thoughts, busy about these outward things, perform this ill office to our minds, and are still jogging them and buzzing in them, they deprive the mind of rest, they are then excessive.

If a man lie down, and his lodging be otherwise never so well accommodated, yet if there be thorns in his bed, he cannot lie easily. The cares of the world are compared to thorns, Mat. xiii. 22. When our thoughts lay our minds and hearts in an uneasy posture, and are still pricking them when they should be at rest, and make our enjoyments as a bed of thorns to us, there is a lamentable inordinacy in them. When the possession of outward things, which should be quiet and comfortable (else they are not

enjoyed), is disturbed and embittered by carking disquieting thoughts, here is excess.

(8.) When it indisposeth us for holy duties ; when we cannot break through the crowd of these thoughts to converse with God, or, if we do, yet too seldom, and with difficulty, and then come with souls discomposed, and these thoughts still follow us. When they should be quite shaken off and cashiered, they are still crowding in, when our minds should be wholly taken up with God ; and they are still giving us diversion and interruption, and call off some part of our souls from him who expects them all, so that they are distracted and divided when they should be most united and entirely fixed on him, who will be sought with our whole hearts. They often hinder us from offering unto God, and when we can get leave of them to bring a sacrifice, yet these flies seize on it and spoil it. God likes not such offerings, no more than we like fly-blown meat. We come to pray, and when our minds and hearts should ascend up to God, these call them down, and carry them another way. We come to hear, and when the Lord speaks, we should attend him alone, and hearken to nothing else ; but then these come, and knock, and buzz, and will be heard ; and God, and what he speaks to us, is little minded. We set ourselves to meditate ; oh, but our minds are prepossessed and taken up before with the concerns of this life, and they will not give way to thoughts of God and heaven and our eternal concerns, or they will mix with them, and make an untoward confused medley of heaven and earth, God and the world, in one lump, in one exercise. When these keep us from drawing near God, or from approaching him with cheerfulness, heartiness, entireness of mind and affection, or make us come with our loins ungirded, our souls dragging in the dirt of the world, and sweeping the dust after them, and raising a cloud of it, so that we cannot discern well where we are, or what we are doing, whether with God or with the world, whether we are minding him or it ; or rather lose the sight of God, where he is to be most seen and enjoyed. When these cares bring us to this pass, then they are intolerably excessive.

(4.) When it is distrustful, arises from our not trusting God, or takes us off from depending on him, Isa. vii. 9, 2 Chron. xx. 20. To trust God with our affairs is the way to be established, to have the mind settled. When it is staggering and wavering betwixt fear and hope, and so unquiet and unsettled, this is from an excess of carefulness. When the soul thinks not itself sufficiently secured by the promise or providence of God, when he doubts whether the Lord is able, or whether he is willing, to provide for him and his, or to secure his concerns, or to dispose of all his affairs for the best, and so does not commit his way to him, but will look after it himself, and employs his thoughts anxiously about it, as though otherwise it could not go well, this is distrustful, and so sinful and excessive carefulness.

You will say we may, we must use the means, that is our duty. True, but do ye no more herein than is your duty ? Over-doing is from over-much carefulness and too little faith. And when you have done what is requisite herein, why are you so solicitous about the event, so thoughtful what will be the issue of your endeavours ? That is wholly in God's hands, and belongs not to you, but to him. If you believe he will do anything at all, you must not doubt but he will take care of that which is properly his own work ; and if he will take care of it, why do you so much trouble yourselves about it ? Why do you not leave that to him which is properly his ? Here your care crowds in where it has nothing to do, here it exceeds its bounds, from a distrust of God, where he is most to be trusted, and your

minds and thoughts are very busy where you have nothing to do but to believe; where they should stand still and wait his pleasure,

(5.) When it hurries you to the use of unlawful or suspected means, such as are unwarrantable in themselves, or such as you may suspect to be so, or such as you are doubtful of; for though these be lawful in themselves, yet they are unlawful to you. It is excessive carefulness that pushes men on in such a course as is either evil, though they think it good, or good, if they think it evil; when so careful to keep what they have, as they will stretch their consciences rather than lose or hazard it; or to get more, that they will take some course to do it which they cannot justify, which the word or their own conscience allows not. So careful to avoid dangers and sufferings, as to dissemble, or equivocate, or decline some way of God, or take some unwarranted path to do it. So careful to get out of troubles, or to be eased from their present burden, as to venture out by some way that the Lord never opened. So careful for deliverance, that how it come (so they may but see it) they much care not. Rebekah and Jacob so careful to have the blessing, that they would get it by deceit rather than miss it. Jeroboam so careful to secure the kingdom to him, that he would set up false worship rather than run any hazard. Saul so careful not to fall into the hands of the Philistines, that he would sacrifice in a forbidden way, yea, and after go to the witch at Endor.

Such is excessive carefulness, which either draws into sin, or is a temptation to it. By this you may understand how we are not to be careful, what carefulness it is that is forbidden, and how it may be discerned. I have stayed the longer in the explication, because it is of a practical tendency.

In the next place, let me confirm this practical truth, and enforce it as your duty, by some considerations, which may serve both as reasons and motives for this purpose. The people of Christ should not be careful with such carefulness as I have described, for,

1. It is useless, it will not serve the turn; you will be nothing the nearer to what you aim at, for so much carefulness; it will not help you, it will rather hinder you from what you desire; and who that has the exercise of reason will make use of that which is no way useful for his purpose? This is one argument which the Wisdom of God (Christ himself) urges against it, Mat. vi. 27. You would count him a madman who would expect to grow taller by being thoughtful, or to lengthen his life by greatening his cares. Why, says Christ, you can no more reasonably expect to make provision for your life by such cares. This is no more the way to increase or secure your outward concerns, than it is to add a cubit to your stature: Ps. cxvii. 2, 'It is vain to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows.' To cark and care is not the way to wealth, or the cause of it; those that take that course find they do it in vain, and are generally disappointed, *ὅταν ὁσέε*, since it is the Lord (so the words are to be read) who gives his people plenty, rest and comfort therein, though they never lose any sleep in seeking it.

This carefulness is not to keep what you have, or to get more; nor to secure you from dangers and sufferings, nor to bring you out of trouble; in vain will you seek these things this way: it is the blessing of God from whence these must be expected. Oh but, you will say, he blesses diligence. True, he blesses lawful diligence, but he never blesses this carefulness; and if any thrive or succeed, or get anything by it, without a curse, they have it some other way. This carefulness is the way to blast what you have, and what you get; to make it, or the comfort of it, wither, to curse it to you or your posterity; to endanger, instead of securing you; to strengthen your

hands, instead of unloosing them ; and to keep off deliverance, or make it prove no mercy, if you this way come by it. It is useless for these purposes, unless you count that useful which cannot expect a blessing.

2. It is needless ; as it is of no use, so no need of it. It is not at all needful that you should trouble yourselves with such cares. Why so ? Our Lord Jesus tells us (and it is another argument which he urges against this carefulness), Mat. vi. 82, ‘ For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.’ True, he knows all things, but what relief is that to me ? Why, he is a father, the heavenly Father, and yours.

An earthly parent, who has but ordinary natural affection, if he know what is needful and good for his child, he will take care to provide it for him, if he be able ; how much more will your heavenly Father do it, who as far exceeds the best parents on earth, not only in power, and wisdom, and riches, but also in love, and goodness, and bounty, as heaven is above earth ; and far more, Isa. lv. 9, Mat. vii. 7 to the 12th ; but I need not lead you to this by consequences ; see what he says directly, to prove your care needless : 1 Pet. v. 7, ‘ Casting all your care on him ; for he careth for you.’ All that you may be tempted to be careful about is cared for already, by one who can infinitely better look after it than you yourselves, or any, or all creatures for you. What need is there, then, of your carefulness ? If all the creatures in heaven and earth, angels and men, high and low, should faithfully engage themselves to take care of all your concerns ; would you not think this a sufficient discharge of all your cares as needless ? Oh but you have unspeakably more ; that God, who is unspeakably more considerable than all the creatures in the world, has engaged himself to take care of you, that you shall want nothing that is good, that nothing shall befall you but what is really best for you ; and to take such care of this, as to take care off from you ; and is not your carefulness then needless ? Since the Lord takes care of you, why is it not needless to trouble yourselves with these cares ? Cannot he better dispose of all your affairs and concerns, than you yourselves can with all your care ? Now if one that is better able to manage your business than yourselves should take it upon him, would not your hearts be at rest, and eased of the care of it ? Would you not think it needless to trouble yourselves about it further ? And does not the Lord take all your affairs upon him, when he bids you cast all on him ? Cast, *ἐκβάλετε τὰς μέριμνας*, all and every care upon him. And can any possibly take better order about all that you want, or desire, or fear, than the all-wise, and the all-mighty, and the all-sufficient, and the infinitely merciful God ?

More distinctly, that carefulness is needless, appears,

(1.) By what he will do for you ; of which before.

(2.) By what he has done for you. If he have done the greater things for you without your care, you need not be careful about the less, as though he would not do that without your carefulness. So our Lord Jesus argues : Mat. vi. 25, ‘ Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for the body, what ye shall put on : is not life more than meat, and the body than raiment ?’ You owe your life to him, he gave you that without your care ; he formed your body, when you were not capable of taking any care about it ; and will he not preserve the life that he has given, and uphold the body which he formed ? Your care was not needful about the former, and there is less need of it about the latter, because that is less. You need not be solicitous about the lesser concerns of your life, how you shall be provided for in wants, or secured in dangers, or delivered out of troubles. He that took care you should have a life, and a body, and gave you the greater, he will not grudge you the less.

You took no care in the womb when you were there, how you should have life, or how you should be formed ; you need take no more care now, than when you were in the womb. It was needless then, because the Lord took care of all, and he is as ready to take care of all your concerns now. You need not be so solicitous, lest he should think the less too much for his care, when the greater was not so.

(8.) By what he does for others. Other creatures, whom the Lord less regards than his children, need take no care for the concerns of their life or being ; therefore those whom he more regards have less need to be careful. This is another consideration which infinite Wisdom suggests for this purpose, in one instance after another. Mat. vi. 26, the very fowls upbraid us for our carefulness, as needless trouble ; they do not cark or moil, they have no need to do it, because the Lord takes care for the feeding of them ; much less have we need to do it, whom the Lord has more regard of, and so takes more care for. This the Spirit of God sets forth to us more fully. There are but three things which such creatures are concerned in : how they shall be fed, and where they may rest, and by what means they may be safe ; and the Lord takes care of all these. They are not, they need not be, solicitous about them ; for their food : Ps. civ. 21, 'The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their food from God.' They teach us what we should do, they seek it of God, and we should make our case known to him, and not trouble ourselves with solicitous carefulness. The Lord fails not them, ver. 27, 28 ; he gives it them, and gives it in season, and gives it plentifully, and plenty of that which is good and desirable for them ; and will he do less for those who are more to him, whom he has declared himself more concerned for ? Need we fear that, or be solicitous about it ? And as he takes care for their food, so for their rest and habitation. If we should be tempted to be careful about that, look up to these creatures, and by that which the Lord does for them, we may see it to be needless : ver. 16, 17, 'The trees of the Lord are full of sap ; the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted ; where the birds make their nests : as for the stork, the fir-trees are her house.' And so for their safety, he has taken care they should be secured from danger : ver. 18, 'The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats ; and the rocks for the coney.' You may say, those that can help themselves need not take care ; but what shall become of those who are destitute and helpless ? If that be thy case, yet mayest thou learn, even by these creatures, that thy carefulness is not needful. As the Lord provides for all here below, so especially for those that are most helpless : Ps. cxlvii. 8, 9, 'Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth : who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.' The meadows and lower grounds, they are refreshed and watered with the brooks and streams that run through them ; but what shall become of the mountains ? they are destitute of such advantage. The Lord provides for them also ; he gathers the clouds and sends rain, and so they are refreshed and made to flourish. He causeth grass to grow there, where it could least be looked for, and whereby he provides for the wild beasts that feed there, whom men take no care of. The tame beasts, indeed, they take care of, as being useful to them ; but if the Lord did not thus provide for the wilder beasts, they might starve, no other creature would take care of them. And so the young ravens, who being deserted by the old ones before they are able to help themselves, as soon as they are hatched, they would certainly perish, if the Lord did not take care of them, when they cannot do it themselves, and those who are

most concerned would not do it for them. He gives them food when they cry out, as left utterly destitute. When you are tempted to carefulness, consider the ravens; our Lord Jesus sends us to them to learn this lesson: Luke xii. 24, 'Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have store-house nor barn, and God feedeth them.' Those whose condition is most helpless, and so seem to have most need to be careful, the Lord so provides for them, as they need not to take care; and need they take care, whom he is more engaged to look after? 'Doth the Lord take care of oxen?' says the apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 9. Doth the Lord take care of lions and ravens, of wild goats and coney, &c., of beasts and birds? Does he take care for their food, their rest and habitation, their refuge and safety, for all their concerns; so that those who are most destitute and helpless amongst them need not be careful? And is there any need that they should trouble themselves with cares about their necessities or their dangers, for whom he has a more particular care, a more especial providence?

Our Lord Jesus shews how needless our solicitous cares are by another instance, in the plants and vegetables: Mat. vi. 28-30, 'And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?' The lilies, they toil not to make that grow of which clothing is made, nor do they spin it when it is grown up. They take no care, nor need they, the Lord clothes them. He not only makes them grow, but makes them flourish to such a degree, as 'Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them.' Now, says he (and it is the arguing of him in whom dwells all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge), if he made so splendid and rich provision for the withering grass, the soon fading flowers, of so little account with him, yea, with us, what then will he not be ready to do for those whom he much more regards and values? The lilies, the flowers, the grass, they need not care, and why? Because the Lord takes care for them; and if this be good reason, then sure those whom he takes more care of have less need to be careful. It is great vanity, if it were no worse, to trouble yourselves with that which is altogether needless; and carefulness about the concerns of this life is manifestly needless, upon many accounts, which we have from the mouth of Wisdom itself.

8. It is heathenish. Such carefulness about these outward things is no better than gross heathenism. This argument our Lord Jesus urges against it: Mat. vi. 92, 'About these things are the Gentiles solicitous.' It is the character of a heathen to be so careful about the things of this life, it smells rank of that blindness and infidelity in which the heathens are shut up. It should be as far from the disciples of Christ as heathenism is from Christianity; they more resemble the Gentiles than the people of Christ, who give way to such cares. It is heathenism in the professors of Christ's gospel, which is the worst and most intolerable. It signifies both heathenish thoughts of God, and heathenish apprehensions of things here below; both seem to be intimated in those words, ver. 92, 'For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.' Let us touch both.

(1.) It imports heathenish conceits of God, as if he were no God, or had no providence, or did not concern himself in the government of the world, or had no special regard of human affairs; as if he knew not what we wanted, or what we feared, or did not regard our necessities or dangers, though he knew them, but left us to shift for ourselves as well as we could, without

any other aids and assistances than those of second causes. For if there be a God, a providence which reaches all things, and is sufficient for everything, but is more particularly concerned for those that are more nearly related to him; if this be apprehended and believed, hereby all this carefulness of ours is superseded. But where these cares prevail, it is not duly believed or apprehended, as it was not by the Gentiles. And therefore after these things they sought, and were so careful and solicitous about, as if they had had no God to take care of them. And it is for none but such heathens, who know not God, and believe not his providence, and mind not his faithfulness, and have no experience of his fatherly love, and particular care and compassions, to trouble themselves with these cares. It is for none but those, whose lamentable condition the apostle describes, Eph. ii. 11, 12, who are Gentiles, such as the Jews called uncircumcised, who were without the knowledge of Christ, far remote from the citizenship of Israel, strangers to the covenant of grace and promises of the gospel, and so without hope and without God in the world. If you would not shew yourselves to be too like to these, you must disband your earthly cares. They will signify you have heathenish conceits of God, like those whose minds the god of this world has blinded, and that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ (who is the image of God, and in whom we have the clearest discoveries of God, what he is in himself, and what to his people) has not shined into you. Much heathenish darkness and infidelity still covers your minds, if these cares trouble your hearts.

(2.) It imports heathenish thoughts and inclinations to things here below. Such a value of them, such an eagerness after the things of this world, as the Gentiles had. These were the most valuable things to them, and therefore these were their greatest care. 'After these things do the Gentiles seek.' Alas! they knew no better things, and so having the highest value for them, they would not commit the care of them to any but themselves, nor trust any with them, no, not God himself.

But have you such an esteem of earthly things? Are these your chief concerns, and so your chief care? Why, then, you are not only like the heathen, but worse than they; for you have seen, or might have seen (if your eyes had not been shut), better things: the glorious things of heaven, of Christ, of the gospel; things so far transcending all here below, so much more rich and precious, so much more pleasant and delightful, so much more necessary, durable, and advantageous, so much more excellent and glorious, as that the sight of them is abundantly sufficient to take down the value of all earthly things, and to lay them very low in your esteem, and so to make you little careful about them, little solicitous what becomes of them, at least well contented to leave the care of them to God.

Christ coming into the world brought life and immortality to light by the gospel, and discovered all the precious and inestimable things included therein, which were before folded up, and much hid from the world. And those who saw them effectually in that light, saw that in them which quite disparaged these earthly things to them, and made them no more to mind them, and to be no more careful about them, than toys and trifles, not worthy of their care and solicitous thoughts. You may see an instance of it in the primitive believers. When Christ, and pardon, and life, and glory was discovered to them by the apostles, how little did they mind the world, how little careful were they about their earthly enjoyments! Presently upon the view of those more excellent things, they 'sold their possessions, and brought the price, and laid it at the apostles' feet,' Acts iv. 34. Oh how far were they from troubling themselves with cares of getting more, who were so little thoughtful for the future, and so free and ready to part with that they

had, Heb. x. 34. Here they shewed themselves Christians indeed, not sinners of the Gentiles, not heathenish worldlings, at a great distance from the heathenish temper of those who mind earthly things.

Christ has been long teaching you this. If you have not in some degree learned of him, you are so far in this heathenish darkness, and hearken rather to him who is the teacher, the god of this world, and blinds instead of enlightening those that follow him; but if you have learned Christ, and been taught of him, as the truth is in Jesus, he has shewed you that by the light of the gospel, which will make the things of the world to appear as loss and dung in your eyes, and not so worthy of that regard and care which the heathen, who knew no better, had of them.

If you would not shew yourselves of a heathenish spirit and temper in the midst of your profession of Christ and the gospel, after these earthly things you must not seek, and for them you must not be thus careful.

4. It is hurtful. It is not only needless and useless, that which will do you no good at all for the ends for which you use it, but it will do you much hurt, and more than all you are careful for, if it should succeed, will come to.

(1.) It will disoblige God, and take him off from caring for you in that particular manner, as he does for those who cast their care on him. It is so amongst men. They will not take the care of his affairs, who will not leave the care thereof to them. If the care of a business be left upon them, they are obliged; but if it be not, but the man takes the care of it upon himself, they are not engaged, they may leave it to him who will not trust them with it. So here, if you will cast your care upon God, he will take care of you and your concerns, but if you will not trust him with it, you may look to it yourselves, and take what comes, the Lord is disobliged. Jer. xvii. 5, 6, 'Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord: for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.' This is all you are like to get by letting your hearts depart from God in over-caring, and flying to this and the other instrument and means, viz., a curse, that will make your enjoyments like a wilderness, and yourself like the heath in it, which does not receive, or cannot expect any good from God. If you will cast your burden upon the Lord, he will sustain you, as he promises, Ps. lv. 22, but if you will not, you are like to fall under it; you have no assurance that your feet shall not fall and sink under the pressure. You disoblige the Lord, and that is a greater damage than your, and all the care of the world, can recompense.

(2.) You lose in effect what you have, by this carefulness about it; you are like to lose the comfort and advantage of what you possess; carefulness, carefulness, like the lean kine, will devour it and eat it up all. What marrow and sweetness is therein, this is ready to suck it out all, and leave you nothing but a bare bone to gnaw on. Those outward things, which should be as refreshment and bread to you, it will turn it into 'the bread of sorrow,' Ps. cxvii. 2; 'the bread of carefulness,' Ezek. xii. 18, 19. This will not suffer you to enjoy what you possess, and then you had as good or better be without it; you have nothing of it but the vexatious care and trouble. While Ahab was so careful for another vineyard, his whole kingdom was no joy to him, 1 Kings xxi. 4.

(3.) It will keep you from being the servants of Christ, so far as you give way to it. This is another argument of Christ against it, where he is laying so great force to subdue it in us: Mat. vi. 24, 'Ye cannot serve God

and mammon.' The more careful you are about outward things, the less careful you will be to serve the Lord. The soul has not stream enough to run with any fulness towards both God and the world, and if the main current be not for God, he makes account he has none; he will count you servants of that about which you are most careful. Carefulness about these earthly things is not reconcileable with your faithfulness to God, and being true servants to him.

(4.) It corrupts the whole soul, the whole life. This is another reason which our Lord Jesus levels against worldliness and this carefulness for worldly things: Mat. vi. 22, 23, 'If thine eye be single,' *i. e.* if thy soul be freed from the mixtures of worldly cares and desires, the whole life will be lightsome; a spiritual and heavenly lustre will shine through it all; 'but if thine eye be evil,' if worldly carefulness and lustings are gotten in there, there will be nothing but darkness, a soul and life estranged from Christ, and remote from a strain and temper which is truly Christian; and instead of shining as lights in the world, there will be a walking on in the gross darkness of it.

(5.) It hinders the efficacy of the ordinances, and quite spoils them; it makes the word unfruitful, Mat. xiii. When the word falls upon the heart, and is about to put forth its force in the soul and in the life, these cares do as it were take it by the throat and strangle it, *σφραγίζουσι*, and so it becomes a dead letter, not *καρποποιέουσιν*, not bringing forth fruit; it makes the prayers to be no prayers, a painted, not a real sacrifice; a mere piece of formality and hypocrisy; for when the lips draw near this draws away the heart, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, and when the heart is gone, the soul and life of the prayer is gone with it, and nothing left for God but a dead carcass: that which he counts no more a prayer, than we count a carcass to be a man. And it spoils our thoughts of God and heaven, and either keeps them out or mixes with them, and so makes us to have earthly thoughts of heaven itself, and worldly thoughts of the most high God.

(6.) It keeps us from joy in God, and disturbs our peace, that blessed peace we might have with God, that sweet tranquillity we might have in our own souls. Both these appear by the context. That we may 'rejoice in the Lord, and that always,' ver. 4, we must be moderate as to these outward things, ver. 5, and careful for nothing, ver. 6. Carefulness embitters the comfort which is to be had in outward enjoyments, and turns that into sorrow and vexation; it is more inconsistent with spiritual joy, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. They that will be rich, who make this their care, they give themselves many wounds, pierce themselves through with many sorrows. It is such a mischievous thing as cuts off or stops the pipes which should convey comfort to us both from the upper and lower springs, and will not let it pass to us either from heaven or from earth. If the apostle had been troubled with cares, either to avoid sufferings, or to get out of troubles, they would not have been matter of rejoicing and glorying to him.

It not only keeps us from joy, but will not let us have peace. This appears from the verse following the text. We must be careful for nothing, and trouble ourselves no further, but to 'make our requests known, that the peace of God,' &c. This is the way to have that sweet quiet and serenity of mind which is so transcendent a happiness. But the hurry of these cares will ruffle the mind and disquiet the heart, yea, and leave some guilt in the conscience too, which will not let it be at peace, and so hereby every part of the soul is robbed of its peace.

(7.) It involves those who give way to it in public calamities. When Christ is foretelling the dreadful ruin of Jerusalem, he warns those who

would escape it to beware of these cares, as that which would bring them in danger of that terrible wrath, as well as other sins which are counted more provoking: Luke xxi. 34, 'And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.' Where observe there is some intoxication in the cares of this life, as there is in excess of drinking. As an intemperate person is overcharged with too much drink, so is an intemperate soul overcharged with too much care, *μῆπορς Capυθῶς*. There is another sort of drunkenness besides that with strong drink: the heart may be overcharged and distempered with the cares of this life as well as with wine, and the effects are alike. He that is distempered with drink is not fit for business nor apprehensive of danger; mischief may come upon him, and often does, without any sense of it: so he that is distempered with the cares of this life, he is indisposed for the work which the Lord calls him to, and he is liable to judgment, and in danger to be surprised by it, and to have it fall upon him unawares. Take heed, says he, as of other stupifying wickedness, so of these cares, lest that day come upon you unawares, otherwise you are in danger to have the miseries of that day come upon you suddenly, unexpectedly, and so unavoidably. When God arises to execute judgment in a terrible manner, and to make the power of his wrath known in the execution, do not think that it will fall only upon notorious, flagitious persons, and that it will punish only luxury, drunkenness, and such excess of riot; even the cares of this life, however they are minced and counted no great provocations, may expose you to this wrath, and bring it upon you unawares, even when you look for no such thing. You know the calamities here threatened, and afterwards executed upon Jerusalem, were so grievous, as the like had not befallen any people under the whole heaven; and they are his disciples that he warns here: even they were in danger to be involved in these calamities if they were found entangled in these cares; and if they would endanger them, who can expect to escape that are under the guilt of them? You see how hurtful, how pernicious, how destructive this carefulness is.

5. It is very sinful, and shews there is much evil, very much corruption in the heart that gives way to it. It is a noisome, poisonous weed, and shews the soil is naught where it grows. To instance more particularly, it argues,

(1.) Unsubmissiveness to God, a heart not subdued to the divine will, not willing to have his concerns ordered and disposed of as the Lord thinks fit; and therein intolerable pride, self-confidence, and exalting its wisdom and will above that of God. Carefulness looks like a modest thing, but if you dissect and open it, it will be found big with such monsters as these are in the sight of God. Carefulness must have its own will, and its own way, and its own end, and is loath to submit to God in any of them. A submissive heart is content to have its concerns ordered, as to much or little, as to dangers or safety, as to sufferings or deliverance, as the Lord sees best and thinks fittest; he refers all to God, and rests quietly in his disposal; but when the heart is careful and troubled, it is because it cannot submit.

The Lord says, it shall go well with the righteous, in whatever condition they be; he will take care it shall be well, Isa. iii. 10. Oh but, says the careful heart, can it be well with me in such a want, loss, trouble, suffering? If the Lord should thus order it, I cannot think it would be well, and therefore I will take care it shall be otherwise; and so submits not unto the wisdom, and will, and way of God, but must have its own as better.

The Lord sees it good that such a one should be kept low, abridged of

what he desires for himself and posterity, exercised with troubles and afflictions; but the man thinks it better to have the world at will, and to live prosperously, and thereupon will be careful about this, and submits not to those providences that cross him in it. Such stiffness and haughtiness, such crossing of God, and advancing of his will and judgment before the wisdom and pleasure of God, is this carefulness resolved into. One would think it were not such a devilish thing, but it is no better.

(2.) Unbelief and distrustfulness, and that by Christ's own arguing: Mat. vi. 30, 'If God so clothe the grass, &c., shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?' There is great unbelief, there is very little faith, where there is much care about our outward concerns. To trust in the Lord is expressed by casting our burden on him, committing our way to him, Ps. xxxvii. 5, and these are all one with casting our care on him, Luke xii. 28. He that will take the care upon himself will not, does not, cast it upon God, and so does not trust him; he will trust himself rather than trust God with his concerns. There is some doubting in such a heart, either whether the Lord be able or whether he be willing, to order his condition and affairs as they should be; and so he will not leave them to him, but look after them with all carefulness himself. Here is evidently a distrust of God.

When you meet with a man whom you fully trust with a business, you will not be further solicitous about it; but if you be still careful and anxious, it signifies you are not confident in him. And so it is here. This carefulness is from some doubtfulness lest your concerns in the hand of God should not be ordered as they should be, and this doubtfulness is inconsistent with that trust and confidence you should repose in God. Luke xii. 29, 'Seek not ye what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.' Where there is such solicitous seeking after these things, such thoughtfulness about them, there is a doubtfulness of mind concerning God; and where the mind is so doubtful, it is distrustful, there is little faith in it; Mat. xiv. 31, 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?' As faith increases, cares will vanish; and as cares and doubts prevail, faith declines into distrust of God.

(3.) It argues much unmortifiedness; that we are carnal and sensual, and carnal and sensual lusts are unsubdued. From whence is such carefulness about earthly things? Is it not from our lusts, that are fed by these things, and live upon them, and would not be starved? There would be less carefulness about these outward things were it not to make provision for these. The flesh must be pleased, fancy and sense must be gratified; if our condition be not such as will serve for this, it is grievous to us. Therefore are we so careful and solicitous about our outward condition, lest it should be so ordered as to pinch the flesh. As our lusts die, our cares will die; but while these are so rife, they are too far from being mortified.

(4.) It argues a great inordinacy towards the world, an excess of affection to the things of it. Our hearts are much set upon that which we are so very careful about. If we did not too much love it, desire it, delight in it, we would not be so solicitous for it. If we did not too much fear losses and sufferings in our outward concerns, we would not perplex ourselves with care to avoid or escape them. Our care of any thing is answerable to our esteem of it and our affection to it. We are little solicitous about that which we have little or no affection for; we have little care of that which we contemn and despise; we would not be so careful about the world if the things thereof were contemptible to us. It is from our high esteem of, our great affection to, earthly things, that we are so careful about them. If we were crucified to the world, and the world were crucified to us, this carefulness for it would not be so

strong. Where there is this crucifiedness to the world, there is an indifference towards it and our outward condition. The heart is indifferent whether we have little or much, so we have but enough to be serviceable; whether we be high or low in the world, so we be but nearer unto God; whether we be afflicted or prosper, so that our souls do but prosper. And where we are indifferent in any case, we are not very careful which way it go, which way the Lord will dispose it, so that we are far from being thus crucified while we are so careful. This signifies not an indifference but an inordinacy; and how sinful, how dangerous that is, we may judge by that of the apostle, 1 John ii. 15, 'Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;' Jas. iv. 4, 'Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.'

(5.) It argues a neglect of heaven; that we are too careless, too regardless of the kingdom of God, and of the way, the only way that leads to it. This is intimated by our Lord Jesus in that place where we have such a rich treasury of arguments against this carefulness: Mat. vi. 33, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' Those that mind heaven, and seek the kingdom of God as they ought to do, first and most, before all and above all, they will find something else to do than to trouble themselves so much about their earthly concerns. Those that mind these so much seek not that most, mind that too little. Where so much of the mind and heart is engaged and employed for outward things (as it is in careful persons), there will be little left for the kingdom of God and their heavenly interest. He that is over-careful for that cannot but have too little care of this; even as he that is too much taken up with his recreations and pleasures will neglect his business. The soul has not strength and vigour enough to lay out in any great measure upon several things, and so different as heaven and earth, ver. 24. If he be too much addicted to one of them, too careful to observe it, the other will be neglected, ver. 19, 20. If you be too careful to lay up treasure on earth, you will not, you cannot be careful enough to lay up treasure in heaven, and those Christ adviseth to shut out the one that the other may be admitted. And why, but because both cannot be entertained at once? The soul has not room enough for a due care about the heavenly treasure, if it be prepossessed with carefulness about earthly riches. If you mind earthly things your conversation cannot be in heaven, as is clear from the coherence of the apostle's discourse, Phil. iii. 19, 20, 'Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things, for our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ;' *μελετῶμεν*, our dealing and commerce, &c. You will drive no trade for heaven to purpose if you so mind and be so careful about earthly things. Merchants can drive a trade both in the East and West Indies, and mind their business at home too; and why? Because they do it by factors abroad. If they were to do all in their own persons, their trade at home would be as much as they could follow. You cannot manage your trade for heaven by factors; you must do that business in person if you will have anything done. If carefulness about your earthly concerns take you off from that, your trade for heaven is like to be lost. What would you have thought if Kish the father of Saul, when both his son and his asses were wanting, he should have been more solicitous about the asses than his son? 1 Sam. ix. 8, 5. It argues a viler temper in those who are so very careful about earthly things; they regard the asses so much, as that which should be dearest to them, dearer than relations or

life, is little regarded. It argued a profane heart in Esau, when he would part with his birthright for a little pottage, Heb. xii. 16. He minded it not (though not only a civil but a sacred privilege) in comparison of that which would serve this present life, Gen. xxv. 32, 34, and so therein *flocci fecit partem futuri sæculi*, he set at nought his part in the world to come, says the Targum. Those that are so solicitous for what may sustain this present life, they too little regard the life to come and the concerns of it. It argues they are far from a heavenly temper, they are of a sordid, profane spirit, as Esau was.

6. It is foolish. It is great folly to be careful about the concerns of this life. This we may learn also from him who is wisdom itself: Mat. vi. 34, 'Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' Be not thoughtful for the future, how you shall be secured or provided for.

(1.) The morrow has burden, and trouble, and turmoil enough of its own, which you are like to find when it comes. You need not anticipate it, and bring it upon you before the time. It is a great folly to do so. Yet so you do, by taking the care of the morrow upon you to-day. You make a future trouble to be present. Is it so desirable as that you will not stay its time, but must needs have it beforehand? Is not this strange folly? Let the care and trouble of the morrow stay till the morrow come; will not that be soon enough? Those that have any wisdom will think so, and not so hasten the troubles of their life as to make those of one day to run into another, and to make those which would not come till the day after to leap into the day before, into the present day, by their troubling themselves with cares of the future.

(2.) But this is not all the folly of this carefulness. It will appear more fully by what he adds, 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' Every day has its evil, i. e. its care, its burden, and trouble; and so much of this as is sufficient for it, as much as you can well bear. And would you have more than enough of this upon you, more than you are sufficient for, more of this evil than you can bear? Is this wisdom, or anything like it? Now, by carefulness for the morrow, for the future, you take the course to have more of this evil upon you than you are sufficient for; for when that of any one day is sufficient, by caring for to-morrow you add the evil of another day to that which is upon you already. By caring for the future, you bring the evil, the trouble of many days into one, when the burden of this day is heavy enough. You pull hereby many more burdens upon you than that of one day, even as many as the days come to, that you are anxiously careful for. It is great folly to charge yourselves with more than needs must, but so you do when you are solicitous about the future; for thereby you make the present (which is charged enough already) bear the charge and burden and trouble of the future also.

(3.) It is folly also, because there is a far better way to dispose of your temporal concerns than by taking such care and perplexing yourselves about them, a way that is easier and shorter, and pleasanter and surer, for the well ordering of them, than such carefulness will prove. And that way is opened in the text. 'But in everything, by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known to God.' When anything is apt to perplex you and entangle you in these solicitous cares, instead of giving way to them, make your case, your request, known unto God, and leave it with him, commit it to him, cast it upon him.

[1.] This is an easier way. Would you compass your end more easily than by making a request for it? This is God's way. Is your way like it,

which lies all along through troublesome perplexing cares? You would think him a man of much folly, and little under the conduct of any wisdom, who, when he might come to his end in a plain and easy path, would rather choose one that lies through briers and thorns and troublesome entanglements. Such is the way of carefulness; it is beset with that which is like briers and thorns to the mind; it is entangled and perplexed, full of trouble and vexation. But in the way of God you may have your affairs ordered for you with ease. It will give you no trouble nor disquietment. The Lord opens it for you, and calls you into it, because he would have you eased of what is troublesome. Use moderately the means he allows, and seek him in the use of them, and you need not trouble yourselves further, no occasion to be disquieted: Isa. xxvi. 8, 12, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.' Thou wilt ordain peace for us.

[2.] This is a shorter way. The way of carefulness it is tedious, it is about, there is no end of it: cares for getting, for keeping and securing, for disposing the things of this life. It is folly to choose such a way when there is a shorter and more compendious way before you, and that which leads more directly to what you would come to, and is most desirable. What shorter way would you desire than to look up to God and make your requests known? The way of cares is tedious in itself; but being an indirect course, and such as the Lord approves not, allows not, he is provoked to make it and let you find it more tedious, as the passenger, that will not take directions from his guide, is like to wander and lose himself. You hear 'a voice behind you saying, This is the way;' but if you will not hearken to him, and follow his conduct, and be directed by him, but will be your own guides, he may leave you, as he did the Israelites, to wander in a wilderness, and be many years about that, which in few days, a little time, might be accomplished. 'They consumed their days in vanities,' Ps. lxxviii. 38. They spent their days and years, and themselves too, in the troubles of a wearisome wandering, and so may you do so too, and be harassed and worn out in bewildering cares, and that to little purpose; for,

[3.] This is a sure way; the other is far from being so. Now, no man who is not a fool will choose a way which is not like to bring him where he would be, when he has another before him which will assuredly do it. The way of God is not only plain and short, but sure. If you will walk in it, you may be sure either to arrive at what you desire, or at that which is better than you desire. You have the best assurance of it that can be given, the promise of God: Ps. xxxvii. 5, 'Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass.' God undertakes he will bring it to pass, if you will commit it to him; and what greater certainty can you wish? Can there be any failing in that which God undertakes?

Oh but in your own way, the way of carefulness, there is nothing but uncertainties. What more frequent than for men to miscarry in that which they are most careful about, careful even to excess? You think the more care is taken, the more like to succeed; whereas many times it proves quite contrary. The more carefulness, the less success; God interposing, and crossing a way that is not his own, and blasting that which he likes not, and not suffering that to prosper which casts dishonour upon him. How solicitous were Joseph's brethren, lest their youngest brother should be advanced above them, according to the import of his dream! Yet the care they took to prevent it, proved the way to promote it; so far was it from answering their desires, that it directly crossed them. How careful was Saul to secure the kingdom to his posterity! He made it the business and design of a

great part of his life, while he was king ; but the issue was quite cross to his great and careful endeavours. How careful was Ananias to secure part of his estate ! Yet, by the means his care put him upon, he lost both it and his life too. The Lord is engaged to disappoint such cares ; and how can any be sure they shall succeed, when God is concerned to disappoint them ? Mat. xvi. 25, ' Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it ; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.' It holds true, as to our lives, so the concernments of our lives. He that is careful, in his own way, to secure his liberty, is like to lose it ; or to save what he has, takes the course to be deprived of it ; or to improve his estate, is more like thereby to impair it ; or to preserve his reputation, takes the way to blast it.

Obj. But we see this carefulness often succeeds.

Ans. It does not succeed, when it seems to do. He that gets anything by it, if a curse go along with it, the seeming success is worse than a disappointment ; and he that gets it not in God's way (as the way of cares is not) cannot look for a blessing. You can be sure of nothing that is truly desirable this way ; you can make no account of anything, but the quite contrary.

[4.] Lastly. This is safer, a pleasanter, and in every respect a more happy way ; and therefore it must be great folly to decline it, for a path in which no such thing can be expected. These, and the other particulars likewise, are evident by this one thing, that in this way the Lord is with you ; in the other, you are left to and shift for yourselves. In this way you go leaning upon God ; in the other, you lean upon your own understandings, and thoughtfulness, and puzzling endeavours. You are with God while you are in his way : Ps. lxxiii. 28, ' I am continually with thee ; thou hast holden me by my right hand.' And while you are in his hand, you are safe, and cannot miscarry. Your course is comfortable and pleasant, being with God ; it is blessed, and cannot be otherwise. Though it seems sometimes to lie through the valley of the shadow of death, yet, the Lord being with you in it, there is with you safety, and comfort, and happiness ; for where is this to be had but in the presence of God ? But being left to yourselves in your own way, what can be expected but danger, disaster, and misery ? Judge you whether it be not great folly to choose such a way before that which is, in every respect, better, infinitely better.

7. It is incongruous to be so careful about these outward things : they do not deserve so much of your care ; they are little worth, and it is very incongruous to take much care about that which is little worth. Particularly,

(1.) They are of little moment, they will not quit the care that they cost you ; and that which will not quit the cost, you count not worthy of your care. Of how little moment they are, you may discern in these severals ; that which will cost much, put you to great charge, and produce little when all is done, you count more worthy of your disregard, than much care ; you think it lost on such things.

[1.] You are very little concerned in them ; they are not the things which are your concernments indeed ; whatever they are accounted by vain minds, your interest lies not in them, nor do they much concern it. And you think it not reasonable in other cases, to take much care, where you are little concerned. Your souls, and your eternal state, are very little concerned in these things ; and here lies your interest, these are your concernments indeed. Much of these outward things threatens, and apparently endangers your eternal life : Mat. xix. 23, 24, ' A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.' And again, ' I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the

kingdom of God.' If the Lord had said this of poverty or a straitened condition, we should have thought it reasonable to have feared it like death ; yet who is afraid of riches, though the Lord have represented them so extremely dangerous ? A small share of these outward things does not, of itself, endanger our souls, or everlasting condition. Lazarus was never the farther from heaven, for all his want, and afflictions, and poverty ; Luke xvi. 22, 'The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.' Oh, but though our souls and future life be not concerned in these things, yet this present life is very much ; nay, but even this present life is very little concerned in much of them : Luke xii. 15, 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' The interest of your life consists not in having much of the world ; for what is the interest of it, but that you may live healthfully, comfortably ? And so we may live with as little of the world as the apostle Paul did ; and what prince on earth lives so happily, so comfortably, as he did ? That which you are careful for, is to have much for you and yours ; to have more than is simply necessary, to have superfluities ; but Christ tells you, that your life consists not in this, οὐκ ἐν τῷ περισσεύειν. Your life is little concerned in superfluities, and therefore you should not be careful for them, unless you will be so absurd as to take much care where you are little concerned. Those things are of very small moment, which are little considerable as to this present life, and less as to the life to come.*

[2.] There is little of reality in these things which you are so careful for ; they are more in show, or fancy and opinion, than in reality. The good which we are careful to have in them, the evil that we are careful to avoid in them, is not so much really as in our conceits. He that has much, and uses but little, what more has he in effect, than he that has but little ; what more real advantage, what more than in conceit ?

What do delicacies and varieties contribute more to health and strength, than mean and plain fare ? How then are they better, except in fancy ? You may say, they are more pleasing ; but if one can fancy the other to be as pleasing, it will be so, and there will be some reason to help the imagination, because that which is plain is really more healthful, and so in reason more pleasing.

What do great places, and power, contribute more to an happy life, than a low condition ? What is the pomp and splendour of it, but πολλή παντασία an empty fancy, what show soever it make, how great soever it seem ?

What real good is there in rich and gaudy habit, more than in that which is mean and common, since this will serve all the ends of clothing as well as the other ? You will say one is more for ornament. But the judge of ornament is fancy ; and therefore, that which is most comely to one seems ugly to another. The lily, the tulip, the peacock, outdoes all the gallantry of artificial habit, if you will but think so. 'Surely,' as Ps. xxxix. 6, 'every man walketh in a vain show. Surely they are disquieted in vain ; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them ;' and embraces a vain show, as if it were a real good, and shews himself a very vain person, in taking so much care about that which hath so little of reality.'

The evil that we are so solicitous and careful to escape in these things is little, but what fancy and opinion puts upon them.

* No man can prolong his life, or make it more comfortable or happy, by possessing more than he needs or uses, D. H. [This marginal note has this signature D. H. the former letter in the Roman, the latter in the italic character. The initials, therefore, probably stand for *Doctor Howe*, under whose auspices, and that of *Matthew Mead*, the sermons were originally published.—ED.]

Imprisonment seems a grievous evil, and what cares do some perplex themselves with about it! And yet a man can confine himself to his house, or to his chamber, for a long time; and if he do but fancy it, and have a good opinion of it, it will not be grievous.

So banishment seems grievous, and how careful are we to avoid it! Yet many can live for many years, often during life, in a strange country, for trade's sake; and why not on a better account? This would not be grievous, no more than the other, if there were but as good an opinion of it.

There is much of fancy in these things; they are evil or not, and more or less so, according to the opinion we have of them. And why should we trouble ourselves with so much care about such things, which have so little reality in them, wherein there is so little that is really good or evil? It depends upon imagination; you may think them out of what they seem to be, whether good or evil.

[8.] They will not answer the ends for which anything is worthy of your care; and what is that worth which will not answer the end of him who takes care of it? Men will not regard that which will not serve their turn, and think it absurd to trouble themselves about it. What do ye design in being so careful about these things? What would ye have of them? Is it pleasure, is it profit, that you aim at? Oh, but they rarely afford either of these, true pleasure or profit.

First, Will they help you to contentment? If they do not, they cannot truly please you; for what delight is there, or can there be, without contentment? Now, they are not apt, they art not wont, to satisfy those who have most of them: Isa. lv. 2, 'Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?' If they would give satisfaction, those who have the greatest confluence of them would be contented. But we find it is otherwise: Eccles. iv. 8, 'There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good?' and v. 10, 'He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver: nor he that loveth abundance with increase.' Will that please you that cannot content you, which will prove a troublesome, restless desire of more, instead of satisfying? And what is that worth that will not please you when you have it?

Secondly, Will they make you better? You have no real profit by them, unless they make you better. But when did you see any made better by having more? They debauch multitudes, and ensnare them in many foolish and hurtful lusts, and feed, and nourish, and minister to them; they are apt to clog the best, so that they move slowly in a spiritual course. They steal away their minds and thoughts from Christ and heaven, and divert or damp their affections to things above. All sorts are usually worse for them, but who is better? If they make you no better, you will be nothing the better for them; and who would trouble himself about that which he shall be nothing the better for? You are careful to escape afflictions and sufferings, but if you were freed from them, would it be better for you? Freedom from afflictions is often a grievous judgment; the souls of many suffer often for want of sufferings, and sometimes are utterly undone. David tells you it was good for him that he had been afflicted; but where does he, or any of his temper, tell you that it was good for him he was not afflicted? How unreasonable is it to be careful about that that you are like to be no better for! Or,

Thirdly, Will they make you happier? Are they any part of your hap-

pininess? How can that be, when those who have most of them are most miserable, and they that have had least of them have been most happy? If they would make you happy, there would be reason to make them your care; but since your happiness is not concerned in them, why are you so solicitous, &c.? Freedom from afflictions is counted a happiness, and yet this has drowned multitudes in perdition. And how often does the Spirit of God (who sure best understands what these things are) declare an afflicted state blessed! James v. 10, 11, 'Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy;' Ps. xciv. 12, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.' You see how little they tend to pleasure, profit, or happiness; and how little should they be in our care, which are of so little moment in these respects!

Fourthly, If the ends for which persons are commonly so careful for these things were gained, it will be worse than if they should miss them; success herein will be far worse than a disappointment. And is that worthy of our care, wherein a failure is better than success?

What are the ends which do commonly excite these cares, and which men are wont to propose to themselves in the careful pursuit of these things? Why take they so much care to escape afflictions and sufferings, and to get so large a share of riches, power, or greatness? Is it not ordinarily that they may live at ease, and fare deliciously, or go sumptuously, and gratify the flesh, or be in reputation and honour, and have more than others, and get above them, and look upon many as under them? And what is this (if we will judge truly of it) but pride, slothfulness, sensuality, and selfishness? And the more they have for the securing and maintaining of these, the more is their guilt, and the greater their condemnation. And should any be so careful to make themselves more sinful, and more miserable? Is this worth your care? Oh the lamentable delusion of the world, in being so careful to make themselves more miserable; in troubling themselves with cares for that which is not only (in the issue and tendency of it) nothing worth, but much worse than nothing! You see of how little or no moment these things are, and so how unworthy of great care. But this is not all.

(2.) They are of little continuance. If they were of more moment, yet if they were of small continuance, in reason you should not much care for them. But when they are of little worth, and of little continuance too, why should you be so very careful about them? But so they are; the time of them is both short, and, which is worse, uncertain. The things of this life are of no more continuance to us than our life is; the most of them commonly stay not so long. We see them vanish and die before us; we see an end of them ordinarily before our few days are ended. But if we had them for life, what is our life? is it not a bubble, a vapour, a shadow? You would think it childishness to see one very careful and solicitous about a bubble, a thing soon raised, and presently fallen and sunk. Who but a child would concern his cares in such a thing? Why, such a bubble is our life, and the enjoyments of life are more such; now raised, and presently gone: James iv. 14, 'What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.' What if there be some splendour in this vapour, what if it please us? it will not do long. It is but a very short show, it is vanishing as soon as we begin to seek it; look on it again, and it is quite vanished. Such is our life; and the enjoyments of it appear for a little time, and then vanish, 'and the eye that saw them shall see them no more,' Job

xiv. 2. What if this shadow keep you from some inconveniences? It is but like the shadow of Jonah's gourd, a worm is prepared that will shortly (it may be the next day) smite it, and the gourd will wither, and the shadow (with the refreshment of it) will vanish. Are we sober when we trouble ourselves with cares about such vapours and shadows, such withering, vanishing things? They are but the enjoyments of a little time; if we have them now, they will shortly be gone; if they please us now, they will not please us long; and those that most please us, usually wither soonest: Isa. xl. 6-8, 'The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever.' The apostle applies these expressions to riches: James i. 10, 11, 'But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.' The grass, or the stalk of the flower, is soon gone, that will be cut down or wither shortly. Oh but the flower, that which more pleases us, stays not so long; that is cropped, or sheds its leaves sooner. All is withering, all is gone; but usually that which we are most taken with is soonest gone. Oh, why should that which is of so little continuance be so much our care? The apostle, upon this account, thought them scarce worth the looking on: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

(8.) They are not only of short, but uncertain continuance. When we speak of continuance, we have but a short time in them; but if we speak of certainty, we have no time at all. We have no time certain, no, not a moment, in any of the concerns of this life; and this is reason enough why we should not trouble ourselves with cares about them. After all your care and trouble, when you look to enjoy them, the things may be gone. A tenant, if he have a lease of his farm, he may take some care of it; but if he have no time at all in it, but may be turned out the next day, the next hour, he can see no reason, he will have no heart, to take much care of it. It is thus with us as to all the concerns of this life; we have no lease of it, no time in them at all. The Lord of all may turn us out of this, and the other, and all the next hour, the next moment. And he has left us at such uncertainties, on purpose that we might see reason not so much to mind, not to be so careful about them: Prov. xxiii. 5, 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings, they flee away as an eagle towards heaven.' You would think him an absurd man who, when he sees an eagle in his field, would take great care how to fence it in there, whenas no fence can secure it, make it as high as he can. The eagle, when she list, will make use of her wings and fly away; she will do it certainly. Such winged things are the enjoyments of this life, they certainly make themselves wings. There is nothing so certain as our utter uncertainty of having them or keeping them. And is not our care lost upon that which we can never make sure to us for another moment?

Such reason we have, and so many motives, not to give way to this carefulness. Let me, in the next place, shew you what means are useful, and may be effectual, with the Lord's concurrence, to expel these cares, and secure us against this forbidden carefulness.

1. Get interest in God, and trust him. Study his all-sufficiency, and believe that he, above all, more than all, can satisfy all your desires, and entertain all your delights, and secure you against all fears; that there is in him all the good that is to be cared for in these outward things, and infinitely more; that he can communicate this good to you easily, plentifully, seasonably; that he can prevent, or divert, or remove all the evil you are solicitous to avoid, or be rid of, or else can turn it into good; that he is willing to do all this.

(1.) In general, believe the all-sufficiency of God, and get your interest therein cleared. View this well, and you may see enough therein to ease your minds of these cares, and to clear yourselves from the trouble of them. Is not he sufficient for you who is sufficient for all things, for all purposes? If he be, if you have enough in him, if you have more than those who have most in the world without him, if you have far more in him than the whole world comes to, what occasion have you to be careful about any more? Should he that has enough, abundantly enough, trouble himself with cares about more? Is not God all-sufficient enough for you? Dare you give way to a thought so dishonourable to him? Is he enough for thousands and millions of angels and glorified saints, enough for all the creatures of heaven and earth, and not enough for thee alone? And when thou hast so much more than is enough for thee, and all the world besides, shouldst thou be solicitous about more still? Should he, who has more than those who have most in the world without God, be still careful about earthly things? Should he who has a kingdom trouble himself about an acre or a foot of land? Why, all the fields, all the lands in the greatest kingdom on earth, are not so much, compared with what you have in God, as a foot, an acre of land is to such a kingdom. Should one who has treasure to the value of many millions, be careful and solicitous about a penny or a farthing? Why, all the treasure on earth is of no more value than a farthing, compared with the treasure and riches you have in the all-sufficient God. Should Ahasuerus, who had an hundred, twenty, and seven provinces, should Alexander or Augustus, who had got the empire of the world, trouble their heads about a molehill, or perplex themselves with cares about a trifle? Would not you think this notoriously absurd, and them little better than madmen? Why, all those provinces, all the kingdoms of the earth, the empire of the whole world, it is but a trifle compared with his estate who has God for his portion. If he be your possession and heritage, and yet you are perplexing yourselves with cares about these lesser trifles, when your eyes are opened, you will see cause to pass that censure upon yourselves (which the psalmist does in a like case): Ps. lxxiii. 22, 'So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee;' 1 Cor. ii. 9, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' Has God prepared and laid up for you, as your portion, more than eye has seen, though it has seen all that the world can shew; have you more than ear has heard, though it has heard much more than the eye has discovered; have you more than has entered into the heart of man, more than you can think of, though you can think of more worlds than are in being? Is all this yours? And are you still carking, still caring, and are still perplexing yourselves about more, when you have so much already as the whole earth is nothing, and less than nothing and vanity compared with it? Sure you do not believe God and his all-sufficiency. If you had faith herein, and did but exercise it, your cares about earthly things would vanish. They would not stay, they would not appear, but where there is no faith, or very little: Luke xii. 28, 'If, then, God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in

the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith !' More particularly believe,

[1.] That there is all that is good in God ; that there is in him all that is to be cared for or regarded ; that you may have in him all the good that is to be cared for in these outward things ; that there is in him infinitely more than these things contain or can pretend to ; that all the good which you need take thought for, or are tempted to be thoughtful about, you may have it in him, whether you have these things or no. For all the good that is worthy of any care in earthly things, it came from him, he conveyed it into them ; and therefore it is eminently in him. And there you may find it still, whatever become of these outward enjoyments ; even as all the light and heat that is in the air at noon-day, it comes from the sun, and therefore is in the sun virtually and eminently, and there may be found, if there were none in the air ; or as all the water that is in the cistern or pipes came from the fountain, and there you may have it, and more than these can contain, whether there be any in them or not. Now why should you be solicitous lest you should want these things, since all that is good in them, and any way desirable, all that you need care for, is to be had in God, and more and better than in them.

What are these things good for but to serve your necessities, or to serve you with conveniences and delights ? Food, and raiment, and habitation are necessities ; we cannot live without them, and so think it excusable to be careful for them. But these you may have in God, when you are not, or cannot be, otherwise accommodated : Ps. xc. 1, ' Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.' So he was when they were in the wilderness, and had neither house nor home. Here David rested better than in his palace : Ps. lxxi. 3, ' Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort : thou hast given commandment to save me ; for thou art my rock and my fortress.' To make use of the Lord for this purpose obliges him : Ps. xci. 9, 10, ' Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.' And who can dwell more safely, more pleasantly, than he who dwelleth in the secret places of the Most High, and abides under the shadow of the Almighty ? ver. 1. And for food, he tells us, Mat. iv. 4, ' Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' When we cannot have it, he can make up the want of it with a word. He can sustain life without bread, which in Scripture phrase includes all the necessities of this life. He can make these things not to be needful, and order it so, that we shall need no more than we have. He can take away the necessity, and he that takes it away serves our needs better than that which does but from day to day supply them. If you take away my meat, God will take away my stomach, said that faithful woman. If I cannot have what I need, the Lord will not let me need it. And not to need these things is better than to have them, if the state of angels be better than that of frail indigent men : for that is the difference betwixt them and us ; we have these things as needful, they need them not. And as for delights, he knows not God, is utterly a stranger to him, who believes not there are more and sweeter to be had in him than in the pleasantest things on earth : Ps. iv. 6, 7, ' There be many that say, Who will shew us any good ? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased ;' Hab. iii. 17, 18, ' Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines : the labour of

the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' When the very course of nature for ordinary preservation does fail, faith can see enough in the all-sufficient God not only to free him from perplexing cares, but to fill him with joy and glorying.

If you have God, you have all that these things are good for; all that you need care for, whether for necessity or delight, and so are no way concerned to be careful whether they come or go. So long as he goes not, whatever else go, you lose nothing, but what is still left you in him, and may be found there with wonderful more advantage. If a man have a great stock, a rich bank, he will not be careful though he have but little in his purse; he knows where to have more, and enough of it, whenever there is occasion for it. God is your bank, your treasury, all that riches is your own. What if you have not much money about you, not much of these outward things to lug along you, you know where you have enough, it is not out of your reach, it may be had when you have occasion; why then are you so careful? If a man be stored with bars of gold, or jewels of great value, he is not careful though he have but little in small money. The things of this life are but like small money for present use. What if you have not much in pence, and such little pieces, so long as you have it in that vast and incomprehensible sum, the all-sufficient God, the total of which is beyond account, above all valuation, what need you be careful? Will not this yield you unspeakably more when there is occasion, than many bags full of single pence or copper money? In other cases you judge not of things by their bulk, but their value. Here is one thing you have (if God be yours) which is more worth than all other things together, and you may make more of it when there is need. It is virtually all, and comprises the good and advantage of whatever you care for. What, then, need you care for more? Oh if you did but see it, and know it, and believe it, you would dwell far from carefulness.

[2.] Believe that there is no good to be had from them without God. All the cares of the world can make nothing of them, can squeeze no drop of good out of them, unless he let it out. For as all the good that is in them is in him eminently, and so you need not care for them if you have him, so all the good that can be expected of them is from him dependently, and so they are not to be regarded without him. They can do you no good at all, they are not sufficient for it of themselves, their sufficiency for it is from him who is only all sufficient. Be as careful as you will to get as much as you can, and to keep it; yet you will get just nothing, but the trouble of your care and turmoil; nothing at all to be cared for unless he give it you. Now, if you did believe this effectually, you would not, by over-caring, provoke God to suspend that influence upon which all that is anything worth in them depends. The Lord can be as good to you as heart can desire, even without these; but these will be good for nothing without him. Meat and clothes, and rest, though you have more than enough, will not serve your necessities, will not keep you in health and strength, will not ease or cure you when you are ill. Pleasant things will not be delightful, will not so much as content you. Riches will not serve the end of riches, and when they do not serve their true end, they are far worse than well improved poverty: James v. 1-8, 'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were

fire.' God has such a stroke in these things, that the creatures, though given in abundance, will not serve their proper uses when he says they shall not: Micah vi. 14, 15, 'Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword. Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but thou shalt not drink wine.' Haggai i. 6, 9, 'Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes,' &c. This was the issue of all their carefulness, when they neglected better things. They had enough to feed, and clothe, and make them rich, and yet they were in effect neither fed, nor clothed, nor enriched. God did but blow upon it, and all the good of these things, all that was to be cared for in them, vanished. If you did believe and consider this, you would see yourselves, your care so much concerned for the pleasing of God, that you would be little careful about other things.

[8.] Believe that he can communicate the good of all these things to us, though they of themselves cannot do it. And this he is all-sufficient to do, either by these things or without them. There is no restraint with him to do it either way. And though ordinarily he conveys it by these things, yet it is not at all difficult to him to do it without them. He can do this easily, plentifully, seasonably.

Easily. He can with the greatest ease give these outward things, or afford the comfort and advantage of them; he can do it with a word, with the turning of a hand. Let him but give the word, and it will be done: Ps. cxlvii. 15, 'He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth, his word runneth very swiftly;' Ps. cvii. 20, 'He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions, with the turning of a hand;' Ps. civ. 28, 'That thou givest them they gather; thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good;' and Ps. cxlv. 16, 'Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.' That which the things themselves cannot do, with all their abundance; that which we cannot do, with all our carefulness (satisfy us with the good of them), he can do more easily than we can open our hand. If we be careful to have these things, the good of them, without much trouble, faith will direct us where it may be had with ease; it will lead us to mind God, and not to mind nor be thoughtful about the things themselves.

Plentifully. He can fill, he can satisfy us with the goodness of them; not with the husks, which is all we can have without him, perplex ourselves with what cares we will, but with that which is desirable in them: Ps. civ. 28, 'Thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good;' Ps. lxxviii. 10, 'Thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.' 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.' He can give abundance of the good where there is but a little of the things; much contentment with it, much spiritual advantage by it; and upon that account, Ps. xxxvii. 16, 'A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.' And it is true in this sense, though it may look farther, when it is said, Luke i. 53, 'He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.' He sends them away empty of the good of riches while they have them, and fills those with it who have them not. He can convey the marrow to others, and leave

them nothing but the bare bone to gnaw on, which, how big soever it be (how bulky soever their estates are), is nothing the better, being but a bare and empty bone. If we be tempted to be careful for much of these things, which is so common as the best are in danger, this believed will help us to cease from this carefulness, and to apply ourselves to him, in whose hands alone plenty, and all the good of it, all that is to be cared for, is plentifully found.

Seasonably. When they will do us no hurt, when they would do us most good, when they are most needful, most useful. We know not the season, we mind it not. We would have these things, and are careful to have much of them at a venture; whether they will do us good or hurt we care not, but to take much care to have them, and our fill of them, whatever be the issue; as one in a fever, that will have wine, and his fill of it, though he die for it; he will have his appetite, indeed his distemper, gratified; come what will of it, whether it be safe or seasonable, he cares not. We consider not, we know not when it is safe, when it is seasonable; but the Lord knows perfectly, and can give it when the season is: Ps. civ. 27, 'These wait all upon thee, that thou may give them their meat in his due season;' and cxlv. 15, 'The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.' Hosea vi. 8, 'He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain on the earth.' He can give these, as he gives the first and latter rain, when it is most needful, and will be of greatest advantage.

This believed, would help us to eye God, and fix our minds on him, instead of fixing our minds on, and employing our thoughtfulness about, our outward concerns. This would teach us not to strain our souls with cares, in leaping greedily at the fruit which is above our reach; and observe the hand of God, which only can convey it to us seasonably, when it will be good for us, and worth the having.

This believed, that the Lord can give us the good of these things without them, will help us not to be so careful for the things themselves, for the good that is to [be] had by them, is all that is to be cared for in them; and this the Lord can help us to, whether we have them or no. When you have drawn all the spirit out of any herb or plant, you regard not the gross, dry, useless matter that is left, nor are solicitous what becomes of it. If you have the advantage and comfort which is expected from outward enjoyments, you have all the spirits of them, and this the Lord is sufficient to give you without them, yea, and to help you to as much of this in a little as in more of them. And this believed will help you to be indifferent as to the measure of these things, not to be careful or solicitous whether you have less or more.

[4.] Believe that he can secure you from whatever you are solicitous to avoid, or ease you of whatever you are careful to be rid of.

First, Losses, troubles, sufferings are wholly and uncontrollably at his disposing; he can prevent them when they are afar off and keep them so; he can divert them when they are near and turn them another way; he can remove them when they are upon you, for all of this nature that you are apt to be thoughtful about is in his hand, and all the instruments and circumstances thereof, and he can take whatever order therein he pleases. You are not careful about your concerns, when they are in such hands as you can be confident of. Have faith in God, believe but that all is in the best hands that they can possibly fall into when they are in his, and you will see no occasion to be careful. If you will but give God the pre-eminence above some creatures, and believe your affairs are better in his hands than in those

persons that you can be confident of, your hearts may be at rest, all is as well as can be, unless it can be better than when all is at God's disposing. When a stone cannot move without the hand that you can trust, you will not be careful about what you may suffer by it. Why, all that may trouble you lies as still as a stone in the highway, and cannot move without the hand which you have so much cause to trust, which you have more reason to trust than your own : if you believe this, how can you be careful ? If the rod be in the hand that the child can trust and be secure of, he will not be perplexed about it. All that can afflict you is in the hand of God ; if that be to be trusted, your minds may be at ease, there is not the least occasion to be anxious or perplexed ; believe but that God can secure you ; that may hush your cares. The three faithful Jews found it enough for this purpose : Dan. iii. 16, 17, ' Our God is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.' This they believed, therefore they were not careful.

Secondly, He can secure you from the evil of afflictions, troubles, losses ; if they should come upon you, he can keep the evil of them far from you : Job v. 19, ' He shall deliver thee in six troubles ; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.' When you are surrounded with troubles, he can take order that the evil of them shall not so much as touch you, Ps. xxiii. He can take a course that there shall be no evil to be feared ; and where there is no cause of fear, there can be no occasion to be perplexed. There is nothing that in reason you can be careful to avoid but that which is evil ; believe but that God is sufficient to secure you from all the evil of troubles, and all occasion of carefulness will vanish. The evil of them, which we are so careful to avoid, is the smart, the sting, the damage, the grievance, we are apprehensive of ; but the Lord can pull out the sting, and what need you then care for the serpent ? He can keep you from any damage by them, and what need you care what seems lost, if there be no damage by it ? He can ease you of the grievance, and why so careful to avoid that which will not be grievous ? He can take order that you shall not so much as smart by them. He can not only mitigate the evil you are wont to be perplexed about, and make it tolerable,—as 1 Cor. x. 13, ' God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it ;—but quite take it away. He can so order it that troubles shall not be troublesome to you ; that pressures shall not be heavy upon you, but go as lightly under them as if they weighed nothing ; that you shall not suffer by what others count great sufferings ; that you shall not lose anything which you need care for by your losses. If the evil be gone, there is nothing left that you need be careful about : and the evil the Lord can easily remove.

Thirdly, He can do you good by afflictions ; not only free you from the evil of them, but make them good for you. He can render them as good or better for you, than freedom from them of itself is or can be. Believe this, and you will count it very absurd to be careful ; it is little better than madness to be careful to avoid that which is good, solicitous to escape that which will prove best for you. God is sufficient to do this. If you lose much of what you have, he can make the little that is left as good or better than the whole, as comfortable, as satisfying, as advantageous, yea, and yourselves more serviceable thereby than, it may be, you would have been with much more. It is not the quantity but the virtue of things that is to be cared for ; and the Lord can convey more virtue into a little than ordinarily there is to be found in very much, as you find more in a little spirits than in a great quantity of drugs. If the Lord can give you all the virtue of

much in a little, what need you be so careful for much, unless the mere bulk and cumber of it be to be cared for?

And, as in losses and wants, so in other afflictions and sufferings, he can do you more good by them than you were like to have met with without them. He has done this ordinarily. Jacob's afflictions, which he met with in the loss of Joseph, proved a greater advantage to him and the whole family than if he had never parted with him: Gen. xlv. 5-7, 'Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life: to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.' If Jacob's care to keep Joseph with him had succeeded according to his desire, he and his family might have starved: Gen. l. 20, 'Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is at this day, to save much people alive.' He kept the Israelites so long in the wilderness, a place of much trouble and afflictions to them, that he might do them good thereby, Deut. viii. 15, 16; he led them so long in the valley of death, as it is called, Jer. ii. 6, to do them good. It was better for David, when he was persecuted and hunted as a partridge upon the mountains, than when he was upon his throne: Ps. cxix. 75, 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.' He did his people good by their captivity, the most grievous suffering that ever they met with, and the more, because it was not only the loss of their country, but the loss of the temple and the solemn worship of God: Jer. xxiv. 5, 'Thus saith the Lord, Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.' He did them that good hereby, which mercies, and deliverances, and his own ordinances were not effectual before to do; hereby he brought them to return unto him and acknowledge him: ver. 7, 'I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.'

I need not stay on particular instances; the apostle comprises all, Rom. viii. 28, 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose;' all afflictions and sufferings whatsoever, for of those he is speaking. He tells us, how that which we count so evil works for good: Heb. xii. 10, 'He chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' More of his holiness is so great a good as far outweighs all the evil, seeming or real, that is in any outward losses or sufferings whatsoever. Believe this, that he is sufficient to turn them into good, and it will take you off from such carefulness to avoid them. What pretence can there be for perplexing yourselves with cares for the escaping of that which is good for you? You may say, It is true, if the Lord will do this for me; oh, but you have no reason to question this, for,

[5.] He is willing, and you have all reason to believe that he is willing to do all this for you; believe that he is willing to communicate the good of these outward things to you, or the things themselves if they be good; this is all that is to be cared for. And this you may be sure of, if you count the word of the faithful God sufficient assurance: Ps. xxxiv. 10, 'The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing;' and Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly;' and Ps. lxxxv. 12, 'The Lord shall give that which is good; and our land yield her increase.' You will not, if you

be sober, be careful, lest you should be without that which is not good ; you will not count that a want ; and if your wants be no other, you are assured of a supply : Philip. iv., ' He shall supply,' he is willing to do it richly. You are no more concerned to be careful about this, than a child is, who has, and knows he has, an affectionate father, able and willing to provide for him. The Lord is more willing to provide herein for you than the best of fathers on earth. Would you desire more to free you from cares ? Sure it needs not. Why, but you have more. The Lord is as much more willing to do it than any earthly parents, as the love of God exceeds the affections of men ; as much more willing as the Father of mercies, and the God of all comforts, exceeds that bit of affection, that drop of love, which the narrow heart of an earthly parent can contain : Mat. vii. 11, ' If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good gifts to them that ask him ?' As much more willingly does he give as heaven is above earth. Do but believe this effectually, and you shall be ashamed, if not astonished, at the absurdness and unreasonableness of your cares.

And then as for afflictions, &c., he is not only able but willing to free you from them, or to secure you from the evil of them, which is all you need to care, or have any occasion to perplex yourselves about ; and not only so, but to make them really good for you. All which he assures us of by many great and precious promises (which I must not mention now), he is willing to make them good ; to make them prove best for you, in all respects, both in point of pleasure, and profit, and honour ; all which are comprised in that of the apostle : 1 Pet. i. 6, 7, ' Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in weariness through manifold temptations ; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.' Here is delight wherewith you may greatly rejoice, even in the midst of afflictions ; here is profit, richer than that of gold, something much more precious and valuable ; here is approbation with God, the greatest honour and glory, both at his appearing here and hereafter ; and all this the issue of manifold afflictions, of fiery trials. But that the Lord is willing you should partake of so sweet, and rich, and noble advantage, he would not be willing you should suffer, no, not for a season. He is ready to make these not only good, but better for you than outward prosperity is wont to be, or of itself can be ; and need you be so careful to avoid that which he will make better for you, than the condition you naturally most desire, better than a prosperous and flourishing state ? Do ye think the apostle Paul, for all his sufferings, would have changed conditions with Nero, in the greatest flourish of his empire ? Or, that Moses did not believe the Lord would make afflictions better for him than all the honours, or riches, or pleasures, of Egypt, when, Heb. xi. 24-26, ' he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt' ? The Lord is willing hereby to free you from that which is your greatest evil, your sin and corruption ; which is the weakness, the disease, the poverty, the deformity, the misery of your souls. He has declared his will by his promise : Isa. xxvii. 9, ' By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin ;' and Isa. i. 25, ' I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy sin ;' and willing to make you hereby partakers of that which is the greatest good you are capable of on earth : that holiness, which is the health, strength,

beauty, riches, life and glory of the soul, and fruitful therein, Heb. xii., 2 Cor. iv. Do you question his willingness here? Why, he is more willing you should have so much good by afflictions than yourselves are. You are afraid of this sovereign receipt, because it tastes a little bitter; like a foolish child, who will not take that to save his life which bites his tongue. The Lord is glad to force it on us; so much more ready is he to do us good thereby, than we are willing to have it. Believe but this, that he is so willing to make afflictions so good, so exceeding good, and you will condemn yourselves of childishness in perplexing yourselves much, and being so very thoughtful how to avoid them. These cares would find no place if faith were duly exercised: Ps. xlii. 11, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God;' John xiv. 1, 'Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.'

(2.) Get more submission unto God, if you would be freed from this carefulness.

[1.] Get judgment and will more subjected to the mind and will of God, so as to rest satisfied in that which he counts best for you. The Lord has assured his people that it shall go well with them, that he will dispose of their concerns for the best. If we did acquiesce in this, and were fully satisfied with it, and will and mind rested in it, we should be at rest from our cares; we should not be further perplexed about that which we were satisfied would be ordered for the best. The Lord has given sufficient ground in his word for our satisfaction herein; and we seem to be satisfied in general, and can say he will make all work for the best; and in particular cases, which are remote, and concern others, we make no doubt of it; but when we are tried in cases that more particularly respect to ourselves, and which touch us nearly, the unsubmitiveness of our souls unto God, in these dealings which he judges fittest for us, does presently bewray itself. Oh if I should meet with such a loss, lose such a relation, such a comfort, such a considerable part of a livelihood, how could it be well with me if such and such an affliction should befall me, so grievous, so wounding, which strikes deep into the interest of ease, or profit, or credit, or comfort? Then we fly off, and gainsay in particulars what we seemed satisfied with in general; and make that a question, which, before we came to be specially and deeply concerned, seemed unquestionable. Then we are ready to say (or to think at least) How can it be well with me if this should befall me? How can this be for the best, which threatens to ruin, to undo me; which comes upon me with open mouth, to swallow up my dearest comforts and concerns? Now we cannot submit to God, and yield up our judgments to that which he has so often declared; we cannot think it best, nay, we cannot think it good for us, though it be the dispensation of that God who has given us his word that all his dispensations shall be for the best. Here our judgments rise up against the mind and judgment of God, and what he thinks best and fittest for us we think worst of all; and accordingly we are anxious, and perplexed, and thoughtful, and full of cares how to prevent it, when such a providence approaches, or how we may remove it when it has overtaken us. Whereas, if our minds and hearts were but subdued to the mind and will of God, we would be satisfied with that as best which he thinks to be so; and so our cares would cease, and mind and heart would be at rest from the troublesome hurry of them.

Oh labour for this quiet, humble submission unto God; abhor that horrible pride whereby we prefer our own judgments before that of infinite wisdom, and advance our own wills before that of infinite goodness. See that

mind and heart lower to God in all his dispensations, as most wise, and most good, and best of all for you, whatever they may seem to a proud selfish heart, or to a partial short-sighted mind. This you must do, if you would be freed from the sin and trouble of this condemned carefulness. If we will presume to make ourselves wiser than God, and to know better what is best for us than he, no wonder if our hearts be like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, if we be left to set ourselves on several occasions upon the rack of this carefulness.

[2.] Get your wills subdued to the will of God. If this were done, and our wills brought to a due subjection to the divine will, we should not be at all troubled or perplexed with cares; for, though we observe it not, our excess of carefulness is to have our own wills in this, and the other, and every thing that we are solicitous about. If our own will were not in it, and something therein lay not cross to that, we would not be troubled with cares or thoughtfulness about it.

Why are we so careful to get much for ourselves and ours; so thoughtful lest it should be lost or impaired, but because we would have a fair estate? That is our will, it is fixed and stiff for it. We cannot yield to be put off with a little, though it were the will of God so to order it.

Why are we so thoughtful and solicitous for the avoiding of afflictions and sufferings, or so very careful to get out of them when they are upon us, but because we would live easily, and pleasantly, and prosperously? This is our will, and is so much set upon it, that it cannot yield to a low and afflicted condition, though it were the will of God to dispose us in it. If we did but submit to his will, the care and trouble would be over; that which he wills for us would be welcome to us; we should not trouble ourselves with cares, either to prevent it before it come, or to escape it when it is upon us. You may see this in Saul: it was the will of God that David should succeed him in the kingdom; it was Saul's will that his own son should succeed him, and the crown not be removed from his family. Hence was Saul so afflicted with cares, after he suspected David should have the kingdom: hence was he so thoughtful how to make an end of him. His cares might bring or increase that melancholy, which is called (as some think) an evil spirit, or which an evil spirit made use of, to afflict him and trouble his spirit, 1 Sam. xviii. 8-10. If Saul could have submitted his will to God's, he had been freed from those cares, and the troubles of heart and life, which they brought upon him; but Saul would have his own will, rather than God's will should be done: this was the rise of his cares, and that which continued them during his life.

And thus it is commonly with us in other cases; when our carefulness is truly stated, the contest is betwixt God's will and ours. We may tremble that it should be thus, but so it is. We are careful to have our wills, with a neglect of God's will, nay, many times in opposition to it. Instead of being careful to have his will done on earth as it is in heaven, we are thoughtful how our wills may be done on earth, that we may have all that we will, and all as we will, whatever the will of God be. We would have his will yield to ours in this and the other, and that not to be his will which is so. We would have him will nothing but what we will as to our outward condition; or if he will anything that we like not, which suits not our inclinations, we will hinder it and have it otherwise, if all our care will do it. Oh what horrid pride is here, what rebellion against the sovereign will of the Most High! How do we attempt to cross God in our cares, and trouble ourselves with thoughtfulness to have our wills, though God's will be against it! Oh humble yourselves for this! Importune the Lord to give you hearts

of flesh, such as will be tractable and easily wrought to a compliance with the divine will, to take away that stone rather than heart, which is in us naturally, that will break rather than yield. So far as the will of God is acceptable to you, so as yours can stoop to it though it cross you, so far you will not be anxious or careful. If you could submit to his will in all things, you would be careful for nothing.

(8.) Live in the view of eternity. Labour to walk still in the sight of your everlasting condition; let your eye be often on it; let your minds and thoughts be frequently taken up with that endless state which you must shortly enter on. Be still comparing your time here with that eternal condition that remains for you; consider how little or nothing it is in comparison, and that will help you to discover how small and inconsiderable the concerns of this present life are compared with those of everlastingness, and consequently how little to be cared for. You have that to look after, which is of so much more importance than the things of this life, as far exceeds them, as that vast incomprehensible eternity exceeds a little moment. Oh believe this effectually, consider it seriously, and you will find something else to do than to trouble yourselves so much with cares about concerns of so inconsiderable a moment! Why was the apostle no more careful about the things of this life, why no more troubled about them? why no more thoughtful to avoid afflictions and sufferings, or to get rid of them? He gives you this account of it: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' His view of those eternal things made things of time seem nothing to him, not fit to be the concern of his care, scarce worthy to be looked on. A due prospect of eternity would help us more to overlook the things of this life, and to look upon ourselves,* our cares, as very little concerned in them. He that has his eye much fixed upon that, when he looks downward, will be ready to think he sees nothing. What are the atoms, the motes, that we see stirring about us in the light, to one that, with the help of an artificial glass, has been viewing the sun and the heavenly bodies? The things of time are no more to those of eternity than these motes are to the sun or the whole heavens. Let these motes dance on; what are we concerned in them, unless to keep them out of our eyes, out of our hearts and minds?

A traveller that has but a night to stay in a place, he will not be very solicitous about his accommodation; he will take it as he finds it, considering it is for so short time; he must be gone the next morning. You would think him little better than a madman who would take as much care about his inn as he does about his own dwelling house. Why, such is our case in this world, and so we should think of it. We are strangers and pilgrims, we are in a journey, we are seeking a country; our habitations are but as an inn, and our enjoyments as the accommodations of it; and our abode herein is not so much, compared with eternity, as a night's lodging. Whether they please us or please us not, we need not much care, since it is for so short a time; we must be gone, as it were, the next morning. Ps. xlix. 12: 'Man being in honour, abideth not,' בל יליץ he shall not stay, he shall not lodge a night. Alas! what need he care whether he be in honour or not, whether he have little or much, since it is for so little a while, since he is not to abide in that condition so much as a night comes to? It is not so much in respect of everlastingness. Be not careful about it; take it as it comes, since

* Qu. 'our sorrows'?—Ed.

you must be gone out of it so very soon. Would you think that traveller in his wits, who, when he is but to stay in his inn so few hours, would busy himself to stuff his bed and pillow with thorns, so that, when he can but rest a while at best, he may not be able to rest at all? Thus you do when you trouble yourselves with the cares of this life. Our Lord Jesus expresses them by thorns. When you must rest no longer, will you take the course not to rest a short night? Your stay here is not so much to eternity as a night. Ps. xc. 2, 4, 'A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.' If a thousand years be but to eternity as a watch in the night, the space of three or four hours, and that passed over insensibly in sleep, what is our life, which is but so small a parcel of a thousand years? The fourth part of a night is but a very little thing. Oh but it is not so much, it is but as yesterday, and yesterday when it is past is nothing. This life is no more expressly: Ps. xxxix. 5, 'Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth, and mine age is nothing before thee; verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity.' If our life be as nothing to everlastingness, what are the concerns of it? If this were believed and considered, would that be so much our care, which is no more than nothing in the account of God?

Let those infidels trouble themselves with the cares of this life who think their souls shall last no longer than their life; but you that believe you must live hereafter more millions of years than there are minutes in your whole life, yea, more millions of ages than there are minutes in a million of years, what do you think your life here is to that, of such an astonishing continuance, of an endless, an everlasting duration? Can you conceive it to be like anything more than a moment? And why are you so careful, why so much concerned about the accommodations of a moment, of a minute? What if they please you or please you not; is it any great matter, since it is for so short a time? What if they be not such as you could wish; will they not serve well enough for a moment? May you not be indifferent how it fares with you for such a very little while? Oh, but the concerns of eternity, of a condition that will never, never have an end, that will be never nearer to an end after it has lasted millions and millions of ages; oh sure this should be your care, and so much your care, that the things of this life should have little of it in comparison, little or nothing in comparison of them, because they are little or nothing compared with them, of little or no continuance comparatively, and so of little or no consequence.

That emperor made himself ridiculous to the world, who, giving out that he had a design to conquer a kingdom, and taking care to raise a vast army, and marching them many hundred miles, in the end employed his soldiers only to gather cockles. You declare your design to be for a kingdom, an everlasting kingdom; you must strive, and wrestle, and combat to compass it. Here lies your business, here should your care be employed. If, instead of this, you turn your cares upon the things of this life, you fall a-gathering cockles or picking straws, instead of seeking that kingdom; the things of time are of no more value than straws in comparison of it.