

MAN'S INSUFFICIENCY TO DO ANYTHING OF HIMSELF.

For without me ye can do nothing.—JOHN XV. 5.

In the former verses there is a parable. A parable is a similitude ; and in this, as in others, we have three parts.

1. *Παράβολον*, a similitude propounded, under three notions, the vine, the branches, the husbandman.

2. *Ἀπεικόνισις*, the similitude applied, to three parties, the Father, the Son, the elect ; Christ the vine, the elect the branches, the Father the husbandman.

3. *Ἐκθέσις*, the similitude expounded and prosecuted, declaring the acts and offices of the several parties held forth therein : the acts of the Father, the husbandman, to lop and purge ; of Christ, the vine, to support and nourish the branches ; of the elect, the branches, to abide in the vine, and be fruitful. It is propounded in part, and applied, ver. 1 ; prosecuted in the rest. The acts of the Father, ver. 2, two, according to the distinction of branches : in respect of the unfruitful, *ἄριστος* ; of the fruitful, *καθαρίσις* ; and the instrument by which he doth these acts, ver. 3 ; the acts and offices of the vine and branches, ver. 4 and 5.

I am the true vine. A vine ; that to my members, which a vine is to its branches, give them life, strength, fruitfulness.

True. Not *vitis sylvestris*, a wild vine, either barren, or yielding nothing but wild grapes ; but a choice fruitful vine.

Husbandman. How he resembles one, appears in the acts ascribed to him : ver. 2., ‘ Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away ; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.’

He taketh away, ἄριστι. He detects their hypocrisy, so as they are no longer accounted branches.

He purgeth, καθαρίσι, lops off that which is luxuriant. His instrument, ver. 3. ; the word is his pruning-hook.

Clean, καθαρίσι, hence *catharist*. Take away the abuse of the word, it is the same with puritan, they differ but as Greek and Latin. No shame to be called a puritan, since Christ called his disciples so. It is an honour not to think one's self pure, but to be pure, whatever others think.

The acts and offices of Christ, ver. 4, 5, in that word *abide*.

I abide in you. The vine may be said to abide in the branches, by conveying juice, nourishment, whereby they subsist and flourish; which subtracted, they would be barren, wither, rot, and fall off. Christ abides in us by his influence, upon which depends our subsistence, life, strength, fruitfulness.

The acts and office of professors follow, ver 4, 5, *abide in me*.

Bear fruit. He urges one by the other. It is necessary, your duty, that which proves you branches, to bear fruit; but it is impossible you should bear fruit, except you abide in the vine. This he proves by the same simile repeated, ver. 4, and applied, ver. 5. Take the sense of the whole simile, and both verses thus: the branches cannot bear fruit without the vine; but I am the vine, &c., therefore abiding in me you may bring forth fruit; but, on the contrary (which is understood), not abiding in me, ye cannot be fruitful. He adds a reason in the text, 'for without me ye can do nothing.'

Obs. Men without Christ can do nothing; or, men out of Christ cannot do anything: 1 Cor. iii. 5, 'Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?' and 1 Cor. iv. 7. 'Who made thee to differ from another?' &c., Mat. xii. 84. I shall

1. Explain (1.) what it is to be without Christ; (2.) what is this impotency, *cannot do*; (3.) in what sense they can do nothing.

(1.) Without Christ; [1.] without union with Christ; [2.] without influence from Christ. Unless they be united to, assisted by Christ, they can do nothing. The first seems to be principally intended; for it is *χωρίς*, not *ἀντὶ*, and *χωρίς μου* is as much as *χωρισθέντις ἀπ' ἐμοῦ*, separated from, not united to: yet the other is necessary, and indeed inseparable. Where there is union, there is influence; and where there is acting, there is both.

[1.] Without union. Except ye be in him, as the branch in the vine, partake of his nature, virtue, &c; such a union as is held forth in this cup, a real, intimate, reciprocal, inseparable union: real, not seeming and in appearance only. There are some who are said to be in Christ, not because they are so, but because they seem so: ver. 2, 'Every branch in me that beareth not fruit.' If they had been really in Christ, they had not been fruitless, nor taken away. Those who seem but to be united, seem but to act; to seem to do only, is not to do. He that seems to do only, though he do all in appearance, doth nothing; if not really united, he can do nothing.

Intimate. Abide in me; not *by*, or *near*, or *with*, but *in me*. Appropinquation, conjunction, adhesion, is not sufficient; it must be insition, inhesion, implantation. Many may come near, sit down under Christ's shadow, join with him, cleave to him, yet be impotent, because without him; if not intimately in him, without him, and without him ye can do nothing.

Reciprocal. 'Abide in me, as I in you'; he in you, and you in him. Some may be in Christ, and yet not Christ in them. The elect, before regeneration, may be said to be in Christ; he is not in them, therefore they are as impotent as others. They were in him when he suffered, for he suffered as a common person, as their representative; even as we are said to be in Adam, sinning before we had a being, Rom. xv. 12. If Christ be not in you, as well as you in him, ye can do nothing.

Inseparable. Those are without Christ, who are not sure to be always in him; yet some are said to be in him who may be out of him. The members of the Jewish church were in Christ, else they could not be said to be broken off, Rom. xi. 20; but not inseparably. Faith only makes this union inseparable. They were tied to him by profession, external covenanting, but broken off for want of faith,—'they were broken off by unbelief, thou stand-

est by faith,'—except you be inseparably united, your union is separated from acting, you can do nothing. This is in the text too. He says not, he that is in me, but 'he that abides in me.' Separable union is no union in the sense of the text; it leaves a man without Christ. To abide in Christ, and to be without Christ, are opposed in the text as immediate contraries; so that whosoever abides not in him is without him, no medium is allowed by Christ; and without him ye can do nothing.

[2.] Without Christ's influence, concurrence, co-operation, ye can do nothing. Not that general influence only, which is necessary both to the existence and operation of all creatures; for without this they would not do nothing only, but be nothing, sink into annihilation; this is it by which all live, and move, and have their being. But that special influence, by which, as head of the church, he enables those that are in him to act spiritually and supernaturally, in order to those supreme ends, his glory, &c., this influence supposes union; he concurs with none this way but those that are united to him; and union without this would not empower any to act; without influence, exciting, determining, fortifying, &c.

Exciting. The best principles and habits are as sparks in embers; they cannot burn until they be blown. They are as Peter asleep in prison, will not rise and walk, though the door be open, till the angel of Christ his influence awake them. No second cause can move till it be moved by the first; not grace itself, though more excellent than the rest. It is a creature, and therefore dependant, as in *esse*, so in *operari*. The apostle thought it necessary to stir up pure minds, 2 Peter iii. 1. He in so doing was a labourer together with Christ; he concurs, co-operates by this influence; without it ye can do nothing.

Determining. Souls rightly principled, if not indifferent to good or evil, yet indifferent to this or that act and object. This indifferency must be determined, else there can be no acting; no determinations but by this influence. If it could determine itself, it would be independent in acting. Nothing else can determine it, because nothing can have immediate access to the soul but Christ, and it is not determinable but by an immediate influence.

Though much be disputed against this determining influence, by some who advance the power of nature too much, yet I am forced to close with it by this reason: every particular act is decreed, Eph. ii. 10, else there could be no providence; and how should the soul meet with and be carried to the same acts that are in the decree, with all circumstances, except guided and determined to them by this influence? Our souls are like Ezekiel's wheels, indifferent to go or stand, to move below, or be lifted up above; they are determined to this or that motion by the spirit of the living creatures, by this influence that acts them. They are like clay in the hand of the potter, indifferent to be moulded into this or that form, determined by the hand and at the pleasure of the potter. Paul's comparison, Rom. ix. 21, holds, not only in respect of our state, but our actings: 'We are his workmanship, created unto good works,' Eph. ii. 10. There is a creation which respects acting as well as being; a creation unto good works to walk in them. A pen in itself is indifferent to draw a letter or a figure, or this or that form of either, the hand of the writer determines it; if this be withdrawn, the pen falls and blots. We are such instruments in the hand of Christ, he can draw what he pleases by us; but if he withdraw his hand, his influence, we fall, sin, blot, do nothing, or worse than nothing; as the pen draws nothing without the hand, so ye without Christ can do nothing.

Strengthening influence. 'I am able to do all things through Christ

strengthening me,' Philip. iv. 13; therefore able to do nothing without Christ, 2 Cor. xii. 9; his strength is made perfect in weakness, Eph. iii. 16, Col. i. 11; we can do nothing unless we be strengthened with might.

(2.) What is this impotency? In four degrees take its nature and latitude.

[1.] It is a privation of power, an absence, a total privation; an absence not in part and degrees only. It is not only a suspension of acts, as may be in sleep, but an absence of radical power: Rom. v. 6, 'When we were without strength, Christ died for us;' Exod. xv. 2, 'The Lord is my strength'; nor an absence of part or degrees of power, as in sickness, but a total privation, an absence of all power: Isa. xl. 29, 'He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.' Not such an impotency to act as is in a branch in winter to bear fruit, but such as is in a branch cut off from the vine, have not the least degree of spiritual power to do anything.

[2.] It is not only a total privation in respect of power, but it is universal in respect of the subjects of that power. Every part is impotent, deprived, and wholly deprived of all mind, will, memory, affections: Ps. cxxxviii. 3, 'In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.'

[3.] It is not a mere impotency only, but an incapacity; not only want power, but incapable with any near capacity to receive it; not only as a branch cut off, yet green, for that may be engrafted; but cut off and withered, no capacity of fruitfulness, though implanted. The capacity is but either merely obediential, such as is in stones, to become Abraham's children; or at least very remote, such as is in dry bones, to be jointed and animated and made instruments of vital parts. The capacity is so remote, such a distance betwixt the power and the act, as nothing but infinite power can bring them together; that power which brought heaven and earth out of nothing, calleth things which are not as though they were; hence called a creation, 'his workmanship, created,' Eph. ii. 10; 'He that is in Christ is a new creature,' 2 Cor. v. 17, Eph. iv. 24.

[4.] There is not only absence and incapacity, but resistance; he is not able, and he is not willing to be able; without power, and unwilling to receive it. It is not only a physical, a want of power, but a moral privation, a want of will; both unable, and unwilling to be able, and unable to be willing. Unwilling, 'ye will not come to me,' John v. 40; hence on God's part, drawing, John vi. 44; striving, Gen. vi. 8; on ours, refusing, Prov. i. 24, Mat. xxiii.; resisting, Acts vii. 51; unable to be willing, Philip. ii. 13, 2 Cor. iii. 5; we cannot think of being willing.

3. The extent of this impotency in this word *oddiv*, 'can do nothing'; (1.) that they would do; (2.) that they should do; (3.) as they ought to do; nothing.

(1.) That they would do nothing, [1.] to avoid the least degree of misery; [2.] to attain the least degree of happiness.

[1.] To prevent misery, cannot satisfy justice, pacify wrath, avoid the curse, escape judgments.

First, They cannot without Christ satisfy justice. Justice requires perfect obedience; in want of it, death. That men cannot perform, that they cannot endure; it is eternal death, for the penalty is answerable to the fault. There is something of infiniteness in disobedience, at least objective; there must be something of infiniteness in the punishment: punishment is infinite in weight or duration; that which is infinite in weight a creature cannot undergo, it would sink him into nothing, therefore it must be infinite in continuance. What man is not capable of in weight must be supplied in

duration. None can satisfy the demand of justice in point of perfect obedience, therefore all without other provision must die eternally.

The proper act of punitive justice, is to distribute punishment, to inflict the penalty due to disobedience, according to law. This law according to which God proceeds with man, 'Do this, and live;' perform perfect obedience, and have eternal life; and in the negative, 'Do not this, and die;' fail in obedience, and die eternally. Now no man since the fall can perform perfect obedience, therefore justice is engaged to inflict eternal death on all.

Now, lest no flesh should be saved, mercy puts a favourable construction upon the law; dispenseth with personal obedience, and accepts of it performed by another, a surety, a proxy; so that, whereas the sense of the law, primitive and eternal, is this, Do this by thyself or another, and thou shalt live; satisfy the law by thyself or another, and the reward shall be life, otherwise thou shalt die; wisdom concurs with mercy, and finds out Christ as the fittest person to satisfy justice, both by obeying and dying, as most able, most willing to satisfy justice and glorify mercy. So that, by the mediation of these attributes, the rigour of the law is turned into the sweetness of the gospel, and runs thus: he that performs perfect obedience by himself, or by a mediator, Christ the righteous, he shall live; he that doth neither, shall die without mercy.

Now the former is impossible; no man can in his own person perfectly obey the law and thereby satisfy justice: and none but Christ can or will be accepted as a proxy, a surety. Therefore, all who are without Christ, who have not his obedience and righteousness imputed to them, must die without mercy, and the justice of God is engaged to see it executed. Justice is as a flaming sword, turning on every side to keep out those from the way of the tree of life, who approach without Christ his righteousness. Justice is our adversary, we must agree with it, give satisfaction to it in the way, in this life, else it will deliver us to the Judge, &c., Mat. v. 25, and we shall never come out, because it will never be paid. Revenging justice, as the avenger of blood, pursues all sinners; and there is no security, no city of refuge, but Jesus Christ. Vengeance hangs over your heads as a sword by a hair, and justice cries, as he to Eliaba, 'Shall I smite him?' And if Christ interpose not, his blow will fall so heavy as it will sink you into hell.

Secondly, Nothing to pacify the hatred and wrath of God; all without Christ are exposed to these, and all the degrees of them. This severe affection in God is held forth in several degrees, and all of them bent against sinners without Christ.

Displeasure. Both persons and actions, all in them, from them. He vouchsafes no pleasing look, thought, word; he frowns, chides, smites, expresses displeasure every way: Rom. viii. 8, 'Those that are in the flesh cannot please God;' not they do not, but cannot. And this denotes not difficulty only, but impossibility: Heb. xi. 6, 'Without faith, it is impossible to please God,' whatever other accomplishments they have, or actions they do. And why? without faith and without Christ; he is well pleased in him, Mat. iii. 17, and with none but in him; no beauty in person, no loveliness in actions, nothing that can please him.

Anger. That is more than displeasure. He that is not well pleased is not forthwith angry: Ps. vii. 11, 'God is angry with the wicked every day.' No wonder; for everything they do, or speak, or think, is a provocation. So, as Christ in another case, Mark iii. 5, he looks round about on them with anger. Hos. iii. 11, 'I gave thee a king in mine anger;' those things that they desire are in anger.

Wrath. Sublimated anger, fury, the accomplishment of anger : Ezek. vii. 8, 'I will pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee' ! It flames, burns, and cannot be quenched, Jer. vii. 20. It is 'poured out,' Jer. vii., upon him and all his. The Lord never says, as Isa. xxvii. 4, 'Fury is not in me,' till you be in Christ. Wrath against their persons and services, Eph. ii. 8. 'Children of wrath,' born in to it, it is their portion, a rich portion, a treasury, Rom. ii. 5. 'It abides on unbelievers,' John iii. 36 ; 'revealed against their actions,' Rom. i. 18.

Hatred. This is more than anger in its height ; as Aristotle, it is *ἀνίανον*, it is *ὅτι μετὰ λύπης*. It does *βούλεσθαι τὸ μὴ εἶναι*. Anger would make him smart that is the object of it, but hatred would destroy him. Anger is more easily allayed or removed than hatred ; anger shews itself with some grief, but hatred with delight. God's love runs in several channels, but all his hatred is carried to sin and sinners. Christ is the Son of his love, and none partake of his love but in Christ.

Enmity. It is a deadly hatred, such as is betwixt mortal enemies : Luke xix. 27, 'Those mine enemies,' &c. Traitors, rebels to his crown and dignity : Rom. v. 10, 'When we were enemies.' No reconciliation without Christ.

Abhorrence. Both we and ours abominable ; more than hateful persons, Tit. i. 16 ; in works deny him, being abominable and disobedient. Their services, those which God commanded. Prov. xv. 8, 'The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination.' Isa. i. 13, 'Incense is an abomination to me.' Ver. 14, 'Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth, they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them.' Isa. lxvi. 8, 'He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man, he that burneth incense as if he blessed an idol ;' and what more abominable ?

None can remove wrath but Christ. Eph. i. 6, He 'hath made us accepted in the Beloved.' 1 Pet. ii. 5, 'Spiritual sacrifices acceptable through Jesus Christ.' For his sake God calls them his people, and her beloved which was not beloved, Rom. ix. 25. It is he that reconciles, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. He is the *ἰλαστήριον*, Rom. iii. 25 ; stands betwixt us and wrath. The law works wrath, Rom. iv. 15 ; he trod the wine-press alone. He only can make persons and services cease to be objects of wrath : 1 Thess. i. 10, 'Jesus which delivered us from wrath to come.' Rom. v. 9, 'Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.'

Thirdly, Nothing to avoid the curse of the law of God. All that are out of Christ are under the law, and all under the law are under his curse ; for the law blesses none but those who obey it perfectly, curses all that fail in the least : Gal. iii. 10, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them ! Every one that doth not all things is cursed, and continues so. It is a cursed state and condition, all in it are cursed, 2 Pet. ii. 14, *ἡμεῖς κατάρα*. An Hebraism ordinary in the Testament, sons, *i. e.*

First, *Destined to the curse*, as Judas, and the man of sin is called *ὁ ἄπωλεις*, because ordained to destruction, 2 Thess. ii. 3. So he is *ῥαββί* who is condemned.

Secondly, *Worthy of the curse*, as *τίκτα δργῆς*, Eph. ii. 3 ; and Son of peace, *ὁὶς εἰρηνῆς*, Luke x. 6, *dignus pace*.

Thirdly, *Actually under the curse*, as *ἱοὶ φῶτος*, John xii. 36, &c. ; or *fili contumaciæ*, Eph. ii. 2, the son of the curse.

Fourthly, *Most cursed*, as 2 Thess. ii. 3, *ἀνθρώπος ἀμαρτίας, i. e., peccato deditissimus*, most sinful, most cursed.

In every place, in the city and in the field, Deut. xxviii. 16, abroad and at home, where thou most blestest thyself, it shall enter as the flying roll, Zech. v. 4, Prov. iii. 88.

In every part, in body and soul, in every faculty and member, knees, legs, ver. 85; blindness, madness, astonishment of heart, ver. 28.

In every action, Deut. xxviii. 19, when thou comest in and goest out, ver. 19. The Lord shall send cursing, vexation, and rebuke in all that thou settest thy hand unto for to do, ver. 20.

In all relations, that which is dearest and sweetest, children: ver. 18, 'Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body.'

In all enjoyments: ver. 17, 'Cursed thy basket and store, fruits and cattle;' nay, the choicest blessings are cursed, Mal. ii. 2.

With every curse, spiritual and temporal, of law and gospel. The law curses all that want obedience, want works; the gospel all that want faith, without Christ, without both. The gospel-curse is more terrible, no avoiding, no repealing mercy; Christ himself cannot bless when it curses, or leaves under the curse.

Nothing but Christ can remove the curse, for there is no removing but by bearing; and no angel nor man can bear it, it would sink all into hell; not bear that which is due to one, much less what is due to all. If the Lord had not laid hold on one that is mighty, the heavy curse had pressed all into hell: Gal. iii. 18 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.' Rev. xxii. 8, 'There shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.'

Fourthly, Nothing to escape judgments. This depends on the former. Justice unsatisfied summons wrath. The curse is the sentence which justice passeth in wrath, and judgments are the executions of this sentence.

God's dispensations are judgments to all out of Christ. Not simply afflictions or chastisements (for these may be sent in love, and made subservient to happy ends), but judgments sent in wrath from a judge, not a father. There is a sting of vengeance in them till disarmed by Christ; they come to avenge the quarrel of the violated law. All dispensations are judgments; for, as all the ways of God are mercy to such as keep his covenant, Psa. xxv. 10, so are they judgments to these. As all things work for good to them, *etiam ipsa peccata; sic odientibus eum omnia cooperantur in malum, mala quæ fecerunt, quæ facere voluerant, quæ per alios jurarint*. No question of those which are evil, *malum culpa et pænæ*. And it is clear of things indifferent, which receive impression of mercy or judgment from the principle or intention of God in dispensing.

Nay, those things which are good. *Immo bona quæ fecerunt, in illis non pervertendo; vel quæ non fecerunt, omittendo; quæque acceperunt gratia Dei, abutendo*. Mercies in themselves and unto others are judgments, because not in love, nor to do them good. 'Judgment without mercy,' James ii. 18. No drop of mercy but through Christ, if you take it formally and strictly. Grievous judgments, spiritual, *οὐκ ἀόξυμος*, &c. Insensible: when cry peace and dream of mercy, sudden destruction. There is no escaping judgment but by Christ. He only satisfies justice, he pacifies wrath; and, this done, nothing can be a judgment; their nature, their notion, is changed.

Obj. But did not Ahab escape a judgment, yet without Christ?

Ans. It was but deferred, 1 Kings xxi. 29. And but in part deferred, and but awhile; the deferring of it was a judgment, through his abuse of the forbearance.

Fifthly, Nothing to deliver from hell; the accomplishment of the rest.

He that can deliver from wrath temporal must deliver from this, else no deliverance.

All are as brands; must lie in fire to eternity if Christ pluck them not out. All will be drowned in this deluge of wrath that get not into the ark; all must perish by fire and brimstone that get not into this Zoar, or fly not into this mountain. He only can deliver your souls from death, &c.; no name under heaven by which ye can be saved but his alone, Acts iv. 12. It is Jesus only that 'delivers from the wrath to come,' 1 Thess. i. 10. No hill, no mountain, can cover from his wrath that sits on the throne. No man, no angel can secure, only the Lamb. Nothing but fire and brimstone without Christ; nothing but weeping and gnashing of teeth, nothing but everlasting burnings, nothing but shame, confusion, and utter destruction. It is he that trod the wine-press, there was none with him, Isa. lxi. 8. It is he that drank of the brook in the way; 'in the way,' Ps. cx. 6, *i.e.* betwixt men and heaven. A great gulf, a vast ocean of wrath, curses, judgments, these keep all from heaven, and would carry all as with a violent stream to hell. Christ, to prevent it, he drinks of this brook, dries it up, makes the way plain and easy. But none else can drink it; none that ever drank could lift up their heads but Christ: it sunk them. 'There is no condemnation to those that are in Christ,' Rom. viii. 1; 'He that believes not,' is not united to Christ by faith, 'is condemned already.'

(2.) They can do nothing that they should, good spiritual; nothing [1.] that is formally so, [2.] dispositively so, that has a necessary connection with good of that nature.

[1.] Nothing formally so. In general, if they could do it of themselves, it would not be attributed solely to God, but so it is.

First, Not procure or act any grace. This cannot be done, except it be given from above: James i., 'Every good and perfect gift comes from the Father of lights;' if from men, it would be from below. Eph. i. 3, 'Blesseth us with all spiritual blessings in Christ;' Philip. i. 21, conversion, faith, repentance, love, hope.

First, Conversion. None can convert himself: Jer. xiii. 18, 'Turn thou me and I shall be turned,' says Ephraim, who else was as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; and the church, Lam. v. 12, 'Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned,' else not. There are two acts in conversion: 1. Passive, the work of the Spirit, infusing gracious qualities. It is properly a work, but metaphorically styled a voice or calling, yet an operative calling; also called preventing grace. And by this act of the Spirit we are united to Christ, before grace, both actual and habitual; for the habit is by this act infused, and herein man is become a patient. 2. Active, where, by the help of the grace received (Christ by his Spirit co-operating), we turn to God, unite ourselves to Christ, obey his call. That cannot be done without union to Christ, nor this without influence from him. We speak of the first, herein we are passive, can do nothing, no more than the air can enlighten itself without the sun; for it is called a turning from darkness to light, Acts xxvi. 18, or dead body raise itself; it is called a resurrection, so most expound, Rev. xx. 6, plainly, John v. 24, 25. It is Christ that is the resurrection, John xi. 25. No more than the world in a state of nonentity could create itself, it is a creation, Gal. vi. 15, 2 Cor. v. 17; no more than an infant can beget itself, for it is a generation; begotten again, John i. 18; no more than a stone can turn itself into flesh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, and xi. 19.

Secondly, Faith. Cannot believe. This we have by Christ: Philip. i. 19,

'To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe,' &c. Nothing must be attributed to us : Eph. ii., 'Through faith, not of ourselves ; it is the gift of God.' All must be attributed to Christ : Heb. xii. 2, he is 'the author and finisher.' It is the gift of God indeed, may some say, but man may contribute something to obtain it ; as riches are his gift, &c. No, says the apostle, it is so his gift as not of ourselves. But though all in faith be not, yet some part. No, it is all from Christ ; he is the author and finisher. 1 Cor. xii. 3, 'No man calls Jesus Lord, but by help of the Holy Ghost.' But (may be) all men are not excluded, such only as are sottish, brutish, improve not nature and reason. No ; all are excluded, says Christ : John vi. 44, 'No man comes to me except the Father draw.' Every man must be drawn, or else none will come, will believe ; for coming is believing, John vi. 35. But (may be) this drawing is but suasion, some such act in God as supposes power in man to believe, if the duty be but declared and urged with moving arguments. No, it is a powerful drawing ; God puts forth an infinite power in drawing. So impotent, so averse is every man to faith, as nothing can prevail but the working of the exceeding greatness of his mighty power ; as great, as mighty as was requisite to raise Christ from the dead, and set him at his right hand, in despite of all the opposition that principalities and powers could make, Eph. i. 19, 20.

Thirdly, Repentance. Man, without Christ, cannot repent : Acts v. 31, 'Him has God exalted to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance.' It is Christ's gift. He gives it as a prince ; to none, therefore, but his subjects, those who are in his kingdom, those in whom he rules.

Nothing can draw men to repentance but the regal power of Christ, that power which he exercises at God's right hand. For the acts of repentance are hatred of sin, sorrow for it, resolution to forsake it, and endeavour its ruin. Now sin is so transcendently dear, lovely, and delightful to a man out of Christ, as nothing but an infinite power can draw him to these acts. He loves it, delights in it more than anything in heaven and earth.

More than liberty. He gives up himself wholly, willingly to be its servant, its slave ; when the jubilee is proclaimed, will have his ear bored.

More than time, strength, health, riches ; spends all these upon sin. Experience tells us he is prodigal of these in whoredom, drunkenness.

More than his own body, members of it. Lusts are called members, Col. iii. 5 ; the principal members, eye, hand ; most useful, right eye, right hand.

More than his soul. What is the reason the greatest part of the world lose their souls ? Because they will not lose their sins to save them. The Lord makes this proposition, Whether will you lose your souls or your sins ? The major part by far vote for their sins, and lose their souls merely on that account.

Sin is a man's self. 'Let a man deny himself,' i. e. his sins. It is dearer to him than his whole self, body and soul, and the eternal well being of both ; he will suffer both to be cast into hell, and there be eternally tormented, rather than part with one beloved lust.

It is dearer to them than Christ, the Spirit, the Father, &c.

Now since every man naturally does thus doat, is thus nad upon sin, what can turn such transcendent love into hatred, such intense delight into sorrow ? None but Christ his power. What can divorce a man from himself ? What can make him with indignation cast away that which is dearer to him than eye, hand, soul, but the effectual working of infinite power ?

Oh it is a mad, a dangerous mistake, to think you can repent when you list, and so defer it to your deathbed. Oh, repentance is not at your beck, it is the gift of God, and it costs him the expense of an infinite power to

work it when you are in health, strength, and best disposed. What will it require when dying? will you put off such a difficult work till you have no strength? think to turn from sin when you cannot turn in your beds? It is Christ's gift, and he gives it to few; to them, before it is given, it is a peradventure: 2 Tim. ii. 25, 'If God peradventure will give them repentance.' We read not that ever he gave it any at that time but one. Will you leave your eternal salvation at an *if*, at a *peradventure*? It is ten thousand to one you never repent if you defer it. There is nothing to ground hopes on, much against it.

Fourthly, Love. One out of Christ cannot love Christ, neither *amores beneficentia* nor *complacentia*. Not for what he does; for no special favour, no spiritual blessing is vouchsafed but in Christ, Eph. i.; nor for what he is, for out of Christ he sees no beauty, tastes no sweetness, though there be nothing else in him; he knows him not, he sees no beauty nor comeliness that he should desire him. Christ is either a stumbling-block or foolishness; he never manifests himself but when he comes to make his abode, John xiv. 21, 23. Nor does he taste any sweetness in him; none taste the Lord as gracious but those that come to him as a living stone, &c., 1 Peter ii. 8-5. He must lie in your bosoms as a bundle of myrrh. No grounds of love, interest, likeness, love.

Fifthly, Hope. Out of Christ, without hope, Eph. ii. 12; Col. i. 27. 'Christ in you the hope of glory.' If you be not in Christ, he is not in you, and then no hope of glory. All other grounds, civility, morality, external acts of charity, piety, are but sand, and what then will become of the house? Mat. vii. 27; Job xi. 20, 'Your hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost;' no lively hope. Christ is the life of it: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Begotten again.' There is no more hope of heaven without Christ, than hope of a man's life that is giving up the ghost. Hope in Christ is as an anchor, Heb. vi. 19, 20, fastened within the veil, i. e. in heaven, upon Christ gone thither for that purpose, as the high priest into the sanctuary. All other hope is as a spider's web, Job viii. 13-15. The hypocrite, those who come nearest Christ, those who seem to be in him, who profess so to others, and sometimes think so themselves, yet because not in him, without hope; seeming union, seeming hope. Those that forget God, the proper character of those who are out of Christ and continue so; for if they did remember God, how dreadful, how terrible he is, a consuming fire, a revenging judge, an enraged enemy, they durst not so continue.

Secondly, Cannot subdue any lust. Jer. xiii. 23, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?' &c. These may be painted or covered, but not changed. One out of Christ may restrain the outward acts, but not mortify the principle. There can be no formal opposition of sin in such a one, much less victory. Contrary qualities oppose one another in the same subject, as heat and cold. In water, the natural coldness strives with the heat it has from the fire, till it have reduced it to its natural temper; but when the whole subject is possessed by one quality, there is no contention. Sin possesses the whole soul, there is no room for grace until Christ make it; the strong man armed keeps the house, all is quiet, nothing to make opposition.

If there were any, yet no hopes of prevailing without Christ, he only is able to conquer sin; its power transcends all the power in heaven and earth but his. All the power of the creatures, the whole world of natural men, are subdued by it, and made its slaves. Sin reigns over all, the whole world lies in wickedness, fettered, captivated.

There is more strength in a saint to wrestle with sin than in all the natu-

ral men in the world ; yet sin has been too strong for any saint that ever lived, it has foiled them, they have fallen one time or other.

There was more in Adam, while innocent, to resist sin, than in any saint since ; for sin has a party within them, so as they are divided, weakened, and often betrayed by sin within to temptation without. But sin had no such advantage over Adam, yet it overthrew him.

The angels were far more able to withstand sin than Adam, had more excellent nature, more capacious of grace, and nearer to God ; yet sin prevailed against them, cast them out of heaven into hell, transformed angels into devils, and keeps them in chains of darkness. The devil is as much a slave to sin as a sinful man is to him, led captive at its will ; sin says to one, Go, and he goes, &c.

If neither reason, nor holiness, nor innocence, nor perfection, in man or angel, can resist sin, what power, then, is requisite to subdue it ? Even the power of him to whom all power is given. It is he that leads captivity captive ; it is he only that conquered all, and makes his people conquerors.

3. Cannot improve any ordinance, either to God's glory or their soul's good ; not hear, pray, communicate.

Hear. They are deaf, Isa. xliii. 8, have ears, and are deaf. Compared to the deaf adder, Ps. lviii. 4, neither can, nor will hear. But deaf, and stop their ears. So stopped as none can open them but Christ. Isaiah, prophesying of the flourishing kingdom of Christ, chap. xxxv. 5, says, 'The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.' Till Christ open the ear, and by it enter into the heart, till he speak a quickening, awakening word, all hearing is no hearing, to no purpose ; though an apostle, an angel, Christ himself preach, it is not an engrafted word till it be an engrafting word ; till then there is no ground to believe but it is the savour of death, 2 Cor. ii. 16.

Pray. How can they call on him of whom they have not heard ? They cannot call Jesus Lord without the Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 3 ; sure then they cannot call on Jesus. 'Behold he prays,' it is said of Paul, Acts ix. 11. He thought he prayed before, but he did not so in God's account. God counts that which you call prayer, without heat and life from Christ's Spirit, to be vain babblings, a profanation of his name, taking it in vain, no better than the howling of dogs, Hosea vii. 14. No odour sweet, but what Christ offers, Rev. viii. 8. It is else an abomination. It is an offering a strange fire, because not kindled from heaven. It is a wonder ye are not struck dead, burned, Lev. x. 2. Prayers are a sacrifice evangelical. It is essential to a sacrifice to be offered by a priest. Christ is the only priest under the gospel ; those that offer without a priest may expect Uzziah's doom.

Obj. If prayer and hearing be so sinful, it is best to omit them.

Ans. Though a man without Christ be in such a dangerous condition, as whatever he doth be sin, yet some sins are more heinous. He sins in praying, but more not to pray ; he sins in hearing, but more grievously in refusing to hear. Those services are so acceptable to God, as he is pleased to encourage and reward the resemblance of them, as in Ahab, Nineveh ; may defer judgments here, and make future torments more tolerable ; while they use the means, they are in the way wherein Christ works.

Communicate. Out of Christ they do it unworthily. The sinfulness and danger of that, see 1 Cor. xi. 29, 'eateth and drinketh damnation,' to judgment temporal, or eternal, or both. It is a sign and seal indeed, but a sign of God's indignation, and a seal of God's curse, and to some a seal of damnation. Those that are in Christ, eat judgment, if unworthily ; those that are out of Christ, and continue so, eat damnation. God sometimes inflicts temporal judgments, yea, death itself, on saints : ver. 80, 'Many

sleep.' But he will inflict eternal judgments, eternal death on others : ver. 27, ' Whosoever eat this bread, &c., unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,' *i.e.* guilty of some such sin as the Jews, who wounded the body, and spilt the blood of Christ ; crucify him, or put him to an open shame. Guilty of high treason against the King of glory, prostituting him in a vile and shameless manner, as Heb. x. 29, ' Tread the Son of God under foot, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.' Such communicating is most horrible profaning of the most precious blood of Christ. Out of Christ ye are no better, in God's account, than dogs and swine, Mat. vii. 6, Philip. iii. 2, Rev. xxii. 15. When they receive the body of Christ, *i.e.* that which represents it, it is cast under the feet of swine, and his blood given to be licked by dogs. Outrageous sinners, as much as they can, execute that on Christ which the Lord threatened on Ahab and Jezebel : ' The dogs shall eat Jezebel,' ' the dogs shall lick Ahab's blood,' 2 Kings ix. 10. This is to ' give children's bread to dogs,' Mat. xv. 26. He that comes hither without Christ, comes without the wedding-garment, Mat. xxii. 11. See his doom, ver. 13, ' Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness.'

4. Cannot remove any spiritual distemper. Darkness out of their minds, hardness out of their heart, senselessness or terrors out of the conscience, disorder out of the affections. For the removing of these seem something like to miracles, and require such a power to effect them, as those acts which the Scripture relates as miracles, such a power to enlighten the mind, as at first to bring light out of darkness, or give sight to him that was born blind ; as much to pacify a terrified conscience, as to still the tempestuous winds and raging seas ; to mollify a hard, stony heart, as to bring water out of the rock ; to order the affections, as to joint dry bones ; to make a carnal fancy spiritual, as to turn water into wine ; to subdue a rebellious appetite, as to cure the possessed with the raging spirit ; to cast Satan out of the soul, as out of the body ; to purify the heart, as cleanse lepers.

A miracle is when something is done, 1, *ex nihilo* ; 2, *in subjecto inhabili* ; 3, *sine mediis propriis* ; out of nothing ; in a subject altogether indisposed ; without proper means.

Ex nihilo. These are such spiritual qualities as are created, not educed, *e potentia materiae*, depend not on matter, as the sounder schoolmen.

Subjecto inhabili. If any disposedness, so remote, as no natural means, nothing but God, can bring into act. There is a total privation, both of act and power, *proxima*, and from such a privation there is no regress to the habit, but by extraordinary power.

Sine mediis propriis, such as have no native virtue or aptitude to attain the end, as clay to open the eyes.

The means used by God, 1, have no proper tendency to these ends and effects ; all they have is by institution. They are not appointed because they are effectual means, but are fit means because they are appointed.

2. They have no efficacy but by divine influence. They have not any natural virtue in themselves ; what they have is *ab extrinseco*, from divine assistance and co-operation. God appointed such on purpose to glorify his power, and take us off from dependence on means. What virtue in the foolishness of preaching to make wise to salvation ; in the word to quicken, regenerate, sanctify ? It was not Christ's word to the dead man, but his invisible power, that raised him, Luke vii., so to the sick of the palsy. It is but *verbum significativum* of itself, it is *factivum* by co-operation, signifies something of itself, but effects nothing without concurrence. It is but a passive, not a co-operative instrument. It works but *per modum*

object, and an object has no active power *per se* to work upon the organ ; it is only an occasion of working, which some force in or about the organ makes use of (*Pemle*). Means that have a native power, when fitly and skilfully applied, do always produce their effects, but not when hindered by some extraordinary indisposition. The word, though most seasonably and skilfully applied, many times works nothing ; that which makes it efficacious is absent, not in itself. Those work always, equally, in all alike disposed, not these. Therefore these being so like miracles, require an infinite power, cannot be removed but by Christ. If there be a dark mind, it must continue so for ever, except Christ enlighten it. Christ was sent to this end.

8. Out of Christ men can do nothing as they ought. A clear demonstration. They can do nothing but sin, *Ergo*, either what they do is sinful, or if lawful in itself, yet they do it sinfully. Take *do* in its latitude, as comprising thoughts and words, and all sorts of actions, and they are sin or sinful.

(1.) Thoughts. They are thoughts of iniquity, Isa. lix. 7, yea, the most provoking iniquity, abomination, Prov. xv. 26. All, and always, Gen. vi. 5.

(2.) Words. No good word can proceed from an evil heart : Mat. xii. 34, 35, 'How can ye, being evil, speak good things? The evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things.' The fruit will be like the tree, ver. 33. Ye cannot expect grapes of thorns, Mat. vii. 16. They will be vain, idle, poisonous, worldly, or worse. There must be a new root, a new stock, before there be good fruit ; must be engrafted into the true vine before the words can be good grapes.

(3.) Acts, all kinds, natural, civil, religious.

[1.] Natural: eat, drink, sleep, sinful. 'What is not of faith is sin,' Rom. xiv. Applied by the ancients to prove that even eating, and every act of an unbeliever, is sin ; though otherwise expounded now, it is true in this sense. Heb. xi. 6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God ;' 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God,' 1 Cor. x. 31. There is a command, it is a sin to violate it ; but out of Christ men cannot avoid ; so far from using natural things spiritually, as they use spiritual things naturally, to low base ends. Their table is a snare, a sin, what they eat ensnares them, Titus i. 15. 'Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure,' not the necessities of nature, not sleep or dreams, even their mind and conscience is defiled, much more their fancy.

[2.] Civil acts. Those which their particular calling engages to. 'The ploughing of the wicked is sin,' Prov. xxi. 4. By a *synecdoche* all their labours, buying, selling, working, a curse attends all. No curse where no sin ; cursed because sinful. *Omnis vita infidelium peccatum est*, says Anselm, *et nihil bonum sine summo bono, i. e.* without Christ ; all they have and do. Hence they are said to live, walk, dwell in sin, they abide in it ; their whole life, all the acts of it ; their whole course, all the steps of it are sin, Ps. i. 1. Their walking, their standing, their sitting : when they walk, it is in the counsel of the ungodly ; when they stand, it is in the way of sinners ; when they sit, it is in the seat of scorners ; or if they scorn not holy ways, they despise them.

[3.] Religious acts. Those which may plead exemption, if any ; acts of moral virtues are *splendida peccata*. *Etiā quod virtus videtur esse, peccatum est* (Ambrose). *Nec placere ullus Deo, sine Deo, potest* (Id.). Religious exercises, the sacrifice of the wicked, Prov. xv. 8. Acts of piety or charity, whatever comes under the notion of a sacrifice, is abomination ; the sweetest sacrifice, incense, Isa. i. 18, the greatest abomination ; compared to idolatry, Isa. xvi. 3, because not in dependence upon, and in reference to, Christ.

Obj. The saints do sinⁿ in their best services ; their righteousness is as a menstruous rag ; in *multis offendimus omnes*, says James ; therefore this seems not peculiar to men out of Christ.

Ans. It is true there are infirmities, defects, imperfections in the best ; such as not answering the exactness of the law, requiring perfection, may be called, and are bewailed as, sins. But there is a vast difference betwixt their sinning and others', as will appear by a distinction. Acts may be called, and are, sins, or sinful,—

1. *Quoad substantiam*, or *materialiter* ; when the act itself, abstracted from circumstances, is forbidden, as murder and adultery. And in this sense religious acts, in or out of Christ, are not sins ; for the matter and substance of them is good and commanded.

2. *Quoad circumstantiam*, or *formaliter* ; so that is a sin which is good in itself, if not well done, out of a good principle, in due manner, for right ends ; for these, though accidental to an act, yet are essential to the goodness of it. Hence moral acts *plus debent circumstantiæ, quam substantiæ*. He that fails in any of these, makes the best act evil : *malum est ex quolibet defectu*. These are necessary ingredients to every good action ; and to fail in any one, divests it of goodness. Now, there may be a double failing : through, 1, want, or total absence, as of light at midnight, no moon or stars ; 2, weakness, or imperfection, as of light at twilight. We call things irrational that want reason, as beasts, properly ; or that have it, but want the perfect exercise of it, as children, improperly.

This, then, is the answer : unbelievers want those things that are necessary essentially to make an act good, therefore their actions are properly evil. Believers have all the ingredients, but with imperfection, and in weakness ; therefore their actions are not properly evil, but rather imperfectly good. Acts are good in themselves *in actu signato*, from the matter ; but *in actu exercito*, and as acted by us, they cannot be good, without a good principle, a due form, a right end ; without Christ, without all these. The want of any one makes an act evil, much more the want of all. Those that have not Christ, have none at all ; and so their acts not at all good. Totally evil, not in the parts ; want essentials, not degrees only ; they do nothing as they ought, because,

1. No good principle ; the stream rises no higher than the spring ; not out of thankfulness, not out of love, nor out of respect to God's command, nor to the reward rightly apprehended ; but out of custom, out of design to gain some temporal advantage ; for the loaves, Mat. xxiii. 14, or to get applause ; to be seen of men, or out of envy, Philip. i. 15 ; to remove some incumbent affliction, then seek him diligently, Hosea v. 15 ; to escape hell, out of fear.

2. Undue manner ; not reverently, diligently, delightfully.

(1.) Irreverently. Not with self-debasing, God-exalting thoughts ; without sense of vileness, which is visible in saints in all their approaches ; as Abraham, Gen. xviii. 27, Isa. vi. 5 ; the publican, who stood afar off ; the prodigal, unworthy, and the centurion ; ' the four and twenty elders fall down,' Rev. iv. 10. High, awful apprehensions of God, his presence and glory. Though these may use the words, yet have nothing that answers them in their spirit, but have rude, common spirits, not as much respect as to an ordinary man, Mal. i. 14.

(2.) Negligently. Careless, with lips only, not with heart and strength ; faint wishes, not strong desires, such as that, Ps. lxxiii. 1, ' My soul thirsteth for thee,' &c., and xlii. ; not *δέσας ενεργουμένην*, James v. 16, *operosa, actiosa*, wrought in, possessed with the Spirit. The possessed with evil spirits are

called *inεργούμενοι*. There is a holy possession ; they have not such attention as that of the angels, 1 Peter i. 12 ; the same word, *παράκλησις*, Luke xxiv. 12, John xx. 5, 8. Not such praises as David : ‘ Bless the Lord, O my soul ; all that is within me, bless his holy name.’ Their charity not *παράξυσμος*, Heb. x. 24, but *αγάπης*. There is a palsy in it, a deadness, a benumbedness ; either cold or lukewarm, faint and heartless ; not upon some particular indisposition, but its ordinary temper.

(3.) Unwillingly. Not willingnesses, free-will offerings, Ps. cx., but as a tax, grievous ; the more spiritual and heavenly the employment, the more tedious ; soon weary : Mal. i. 13, ‘ What a weariness is it ! when will the Sabbath be done ?’ No delight ; far from David’s temper : Ps. lxxiv. 10, ‘ A day in thy courts is better than a thousand.’ They neglect opportunities ; little in private or secret duties ; draw back, as from that they have an averseness to.

3. No right end. This has a strong influence into the goodness of an act. *Non actibus, sed finibus pensantur officia* : not the acts, but the ends, give weight to a duty.

Not the general ends : 1, not to please God, but rather to please men ; 2, not to glorify him, but to advance themselves ; 3, not to enjoy him, content with duty without God.

Nor particular ends : to satisfy conscience, not to have communion with Christ.

Obj. But if men, out of Christ, cannot but sin in performing religious duties, it is best to omit them.

Ans. 1. By way of concession and caution. It is true ; unregenerate men are reduced to a necessity of sinning, but it is through their own default. This is the great misery of that state, the greatest imaginable, that they can do nothing but sin. But it was man’s sin that plunged him into this misery. God made man upright, and so he might have stood and walked, but he found out many inventions ; and this is one of them, one of the worst, that he ensnared himself into a necessity of sinning. If he worship not God, he sins ; because he is obliged to this, both by God’s command and his own being. If he worship God, he sins ; because he does it not from good principles, in a due manner, for a right end. If he pray not, he sins ; because he is commanded to call on God, and thereby acknowledge his dependence on him. If he pray, he sins ; because not with faith, fervency, &c. If he hear not, he sins, because God speaks to him ; if he hear, he sins, because he mixes not the word with faith. If he serves not God, he sins, because God enjoins and expects service ; if he serve him, he sins, because he serves him not in spirit. If he eat not, he sins, that would be self-murder ; if he eat, he sins, because he doth it not to God’s glory. Sin lies at his door, let him go backward or forward, he falls into it ; but it was sin that brought him to it. Now, to neglect duty because he cannot perform it without sin, when his sin brought him to this exigence, is to add sin to sin.

Ans. 2. In such necessities, where evil is unavoidable, the less evil must be chosen. If you cannot but sin, it is better to be guilty of the least than the greatest sins. Now, it is a less sin to serve God amiss than not to serve him at all ; better to do what ye can than do nothing ; a total omission is a more heinous sin than an undue performance ; better to offend in manner only than both in matter and manner ; it is *bonum*, though not *bene*. There is a goodness in the acts performed, their matter and substance is good, though they want other ingredients of goodness. But omissions are purely evil, without any mixture of good ; there is more contempt in total neglects, and so more provocation. You provoke God more by omitting prayer than

by lukewarm, superficial performance; and so in hearing. The saints may allege, 'The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment,' &c., Mat. xii. 41. We may collect the nature of the sin by the degree of the punishment; the Ninevites' punishment shall be more tolerable, who performed but outward acts of religion, without inward affections, than those who would be brought to neither outward nor inward conformity; therefore omissions are more provoking sins than outward, though otherwise sinful performances. God, then (whatever he does now), will render to every man according to his works. It is better to pray as well as you can (though you cannot as well as you should) than not to pray at all; the omission is totally sinful, performance but partially; that is more wilful, this is in part necessary.

Ans. 3. If necessity of sinning were sufficient ground to omit religious acts, it is so also for omitting natural acts; if it be a reasonable plea for exemption from those, it is so also for exemption from these. We cannot eat, sleep, &c., but we sin, no more than we can hear and pray without sin; yet these are as necessary for your souls as those for your bodies; these as necessary as you are rational, as those as you are sensible; the necessity of sinning is equal. Now, since the reason is equal, yet men urge it unequally, for omissions in one kind, and not in the other: it is a sign that sinfulness, urged as a reason to omit holy duties, is but a pretence. The true reason is, their averseness to the holiness of the duties, not to the sinfulness that attends them.

Ans. 4. God rewards the outward performance though sinful, but there is nothing but wrath revealed against omissions; *Ergo*, no reason for it. Holy services are so acceptable to God, as he rewards the very resemblance of them, though but obscure. The lively actings of grace are so lovely in God's eye, as he seems to be pleased with the picture of them. It is manifest in Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 29; and Nineveh, Jonah iii. 10; who had presently perished but for their outward humiliation; this procured a reprieve.

Reasons why a man out of Christ can do nothing.

Want of the principle of acting, defect in active faculties and members, no spiritual action without spiritual faculties, absence of active qualities and habits. What can a carcase do without a soul? He wants a soul, spirit. Or what can a soul do in itself (immanent acts) without faculties? or in the body (transient acts) without members? or by these, if altogether indisposed and disabled to act? Or what can faculties and members do without active qualities and habits, since they do nothing immediately but by the help and mediation of these? To use the metaphor in the text, 'What fruit can a tree bear without a root? or a tree rooted without branches? or by them broken and obstructed? or branches, if withered, without sap, not qualified? He that wants Christ wants that which is answerable in a spiritual sense to all these.

1. *Want of the principle of action.* The soul is the principle of action in a man, and the Spirit of Christ in a Christian, no act without. What the soul is to a man, that Christ is to a Christian, all imperfection separated. *Spiritus Christi forma ecclesiae.* Gal. ii. 20: 'Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' Even as we say of the body it lives, yet not the body but the soul lives in it. The body separated from the soul is dead, so a man [out] of Christ is dead, Eph. ii. 1, Col. ii. 13. And what can a dead man do? Spiritual life is the result, the issue of the soul's union with Christ, as natural life of the soul's union with the body. Action cannot be without life, life cannot be without a soul. Every degree or kind of life springs from a soul suitable; vegetative, sensitive, rational life, from a vege-

tative, sensitive, rational soul. Now, as there is a degree of life above these, a spiritual life, so there must be a soul a degree above these, or something equivalent answerable to one, and this is Christ, who therefore is said to dwell in us by faith; this is the *copula*, and he is said to be our life, John xiv. 6, Col. iii. 4, and to give life, John vi. 88, to quicken, &c., so that he is a soul virtually though not formally; as necessary to the life and activity of a Christian as the soul to the life and actings of a man. No action without life, no life without a soul; neither without Christ.

2. *Defect of faculties and members, the instruments of action.* A man out of Christ wants spiritual faculties. He is wholly what Paul complains of in part, carnal, Rom. vii. 14. 'The carnal mind is enmity,' Rom. viii. 7; not only enmity but impotency, 1 Cor. ii. 14. No more apprehend spirituals than a blind man can see colours, therefore called blind, Rev. iii. 17; Isa. xliii. 8, 'Bring forth the blind people that have eyes.' Eyes they have indeed, but see not; for, being constantly fixed on lower objects, they can no more see spiritual objects than one eye can see both heaven and earth at once.

And as they want the prime spiritual knowing faculty, so the prime spiritual moving faculty. The will is carnal, there is a foreskin of carnalness upon the heart; it cannot move spiritually till it be circumcised, Deut. xxx. 6, Rom. ii. 29; Jer. ix. 26, it is old, gross; Mat. xiii. 15, fat; Isa. vi. 10, hard; Psal. xcv. 8, stony; Ezek. xi. 19, deceitful; Jer. xvii. 9, desperately wicked.

Though they have these faculties, yet they are wholly disabled for, and indisposed to, spiritual acts. What can a perforated memory retain? A sieve can hold no water. What can a seared conscience be sensible of to the soul's advantage? It is seared in part as to morals, wholly as to spirituals. If a body be organised, have members, yet if they be bound, obstructed, or maimed, how can they act? Man's faculties are bound, he is Satan's captive, fettered with sins, loaded with fetters, obstructed, no passage from heart or head, for active spirits; there can be no conveyance without union; *dissolutio continui*, maimed; the great fall we had in Adam broke all, put all out of joint. If a particular fall broke David's bones, Psal. li. 8, when he fell but from sense and degrees, but from one storey, much more this from the height of happiness and enjoyments. A failing may put one out of joint, as Gal. vi. 1. The word rendered restore, &c., is to set in joint, *καταρτίζω*. How can a man walk with his legs broken, out of joint, or work with arms and hands wounded, maimed? A deadly wound we have by sin; men out of Christ are halt and maimed, Luke xiv, both Jews, ver. 21, and Gentiles, ver. 28, *mancoſ claudosque*. Nay, considered without a soul, they are no apter for action than those dry bones in Ezekiel's vision were fit for motion, Ezek. xxxvii., until the Lord caused breath to enter into them.

3. *Absence of active qualities.* As the soul cannot act without faculties, their instruments, so faculties cannot act without some qualities, which either concur as causes, or are required as necessary conditions, *causa sine quibus non*, without which there can be no acts. The mind cannot discourse or argue without knowledge, nor apprehend without species, images, representations of its objects. The will cannot choose without liberty; the eye cannot see without its humours, or any that move without heat. Even so no spiritual act without a spiritual quality, and no such qualities without Christ. How can a man believe without faith, or mourn for sin without repentance, or be fervent in service without zeal, or expect happiness without hope, or affect union to God without love, debase himself without

humility, or submit in affliction without patience? These are formal acts, and cannot be expected but by their proper form, no more than the fire can burn without heat, or water wet without moisture, or the sun illuminate without light. It is impossible. There can be no spiritual act without such qualities, and no gracious qualities without Christ. Spiritual qualities are spiritual blessings, and the Lord blesses none out of Christ with these, Eph. i. 3. In Christ, *tantum in capite, unde in membra manant*, he that is not a member is not capable. So in remote imperate acts. How can he mix the word with faith who hath none? How can he pray in spirit who is not spiritual? How can he sing with grace in his heart [who has no grace in his heart]? How can he serve the Lord with fear who is void of fear? How can he have his conversation in heaven who has no heavenly mind?

The soul is not only void of gracious qualities, but possessed with the contrary; no sound part from the highest faculty to the lowest. The mind, *quoad apprehensionem*, dull, blind; *quoad judicium*, wavering, erroneous, prejudiced; *quoad cogitationem*, vain, unfixed, independent, foolish, carnal. The memory receptive, retentive of evil, and that only; the conscience senseless or desperate, accuse when it should excuse, &c.; the will perverse, will when it should not will, rebellious, chooses when it should reject, rejects when it should choose, yields when it should resist, and resists when it should submit; the affections misplaced, disordered, immoderate, violent; fancy vain, carnal, brutish, no spiritual light nor holy order, nor due rectitude in any power of the soul till Christ come into it. Spiritual qualifications are part of his retinue: when he comes they attend him, when he is absent the soul is at a loss. Without these it cannot act spiritually, and cannot have them without Christ.

Use. This informs us of man's misery without Christ. One main design of the ministry of the gospel is to convince sinners of misery. Man will not come to Christ until convinced. 'The whole need no physician,' those who think themselves whole. Survey it as you love your souls, seriously meditate on it, let no thoughts thrust out these. Suffer yourselves to be convinced, be not afraid; it is safe, if not pleasing. To help you, observe my former method. This misery is positive, transcendent, perfect, unavoidable, increasing.

1. *Justice will be satisfied.* It is as dear to God as any attribute, it is himself. God will glorify it, and no way but by satisfaction; it will pursue the sinner, as Asahel did Abner, 2 Sam. ii. 19, 21. Is it nothing to be under the curse, all the curses of the law and gospel, heavier than mountains, more dreadful than all the menaces of men or devils; under wrath, fiery indignation, deadly hatred, as the wrath of a king, as the roaring of a lion? This wrath is heavier than a millstone about your neck. In danger of hell, but a step betwixt you and it! Your life is but a span. How can a man sleep upon a precipice? You are not certain of life for an hour, but sure of hell if you die out of Christ!

2. *Transcendent.* More miserable than sensitive and inanimate creatures; they act in conformity to God's will, and so declare his glory, and improve all the strength received to this end. Miserable man acts nothing for, but all against, God, is always cross to God and his designs. So the best is worse than the beasts that perish, the happiest more miserable than the worm or toad.

3. *Perfect.* Without mixture of happiness real; no degrees, no pledges, no hopes, no peace, but through false intelligence, mispersuasion; cry peace, peace, when sudden destruction cometh upon them, as on a woman

in travail. Inquire of peace, as 2 Kings ix. 18; when destroyers are at hand, Isa. xlviii. 22.

No safety. In the midst of enemies, deadly enemies, above, below, within, without. God incensed, the devil and all creatures ready to smite when God gives commission, and nothing suspends it but a provoked and abused patience. Oh what danger! Those are his greatest enemies whom he most trusts and loves, sin and Satan in his bosom; follows their counsels who thirst after his ruin; like Delilah to Samson, like Joab to Amasa, 2 Sam. xx. 9, 10.

No riches. Naked, famishing, yet without money, lie like Lazarus, but die like Dives; the state of their souls is like Lazarus's body.

No success. All tends to the ruin of their souls: it is worst when best. A successful sinner is like a ship carried with full sails against a rock; all gales of prosperity do but hasten you to hell, quicken your voyage thither; he is but made fat to the slaughter.

No pleasures. None that are truly delightful, but poisoned; gilded pills, please the eye and palate, but poison the stomach, and are bitterness in the end, as James iii. 8, it is said of the tongue, 'full of deadly poison.' There is death in the pot, nay, they are dead already, 1 Tim. v. 6, Rev. xviii. 7, 8.

No pledges. No relation to God that will afford comfort or advantage; not his children, but the children of the devil; they are of him as a father, his offspring, bear his image, receive a portion with him, that which is prepared for him and his angels.

Not friends, but enemies. In league with sin and Satan until in covenant; lie under the dint of terrible threatenings, Ps. xxxvii. 20, 'The wicked shall perish,' &c. Wound the head, &c., a deadly wound, Ps. lxxviii. 21; consume as the fat of lambs, because exposed to his wrath, who is a consuming fire; Ps. xcvi. 3, 'A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.'

Not servants until members. Slaves of Satan, led captive by him at his will; servants of sin, Rom. vi. 16, inferior, worse than that which is worst of all things.

4. *Unavoidable misery.* They can do nothing for themselves; heaven and earth can do nothing, only Christ; will do nothing until in Christ: it cannot be avoided but by doing or suffering. To do, is impossible; to suffer, is intolerable; for sufferings of man, to satisfy, must be eternal. It is an ease in misery to hope for freedom. Here is no hopes without Christ, no promise, no attribute; faithfulness acts not but in performing promises; mercy will not run but in its proper channel, that is Christ; power cannot help without infringement of justice; justice is an enemy till satisfied; wisdom has found out no way for satisfaction but Christ, and if God cannot or will not, how can the angels, saints, or other creatures? They all say, as he, 2 Kings vi. 27, 'If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?'

5. *Increasing wrath.* Swells bigger and bigger till it overflow. As the measure of iniquity fills, so the measure of misery, like Ezekiel's waters, Ezek. xlvii. 8, 4, to the knees, loins, and then unfordable. Adam left a treasury of misery to his posterity, and every child adds to it, every sin casts something into it; every thought, word, act, is a sin till in Christ. Oh the multitude of thoughts, what a black account! You think thoughts are free, but the Lord has manifested as much indignation against thoughts as actions. These destroyed a whole world at once, Gen. vi. 5; cast angels out of heaven; captivity, Jer. vi. 19; Simon Magus, Acts viii. 22; indignation at the last day, 1 Cor. iv. 5. Words, you say, are wind, but such

as will carry into the Dead Sea: Mat. xii. 36, 'Every idle word;' 'By words ye shall be condemned,' James iii. 6; 'The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, sets on fire the whole course of nature, and is set on fire of hell,' as it is kindled there, so it kindles it.

And acts of all sorts, Rom. ii. 5, 'treasure up wrath.' If the better sort of actions treasure up wrath, what do the worst? If, when you call on God, how much more when you swear and blaspheme? If acts of charity, much more acts of intemperance, drunkenness, &c. If, when you hear, much more when you neglect and condemn the gospel and revile the messengers of it. If in acts of justice, what in acts of direct fraud and oppression? If those cast in a mite, these cast in a talent. Oh misery! Justice is already exasperated, ye daily more incense it; God's wrath is already kindled, ye daily every moment add fuel to it; you are already at the pit-brink of hell, and every hour draw nearer to it, and heat the furnace of indignation seven times hotter. Better never have been born than live without Christ; better you had perished in infancy, than continue out of Christ; the longer ye live, the more miserable.

Quest. If it be such a misery to be out of Christ, how shall I know if I be out of him? Those that are not solicitous are certainly out of Christ.

Use. 2. Of examination. Try this whether you are in Christ; come to this trial as a business of great concernment. It is not a trial for your estates: you would be careful and solicitous there; nor for your lives only: there you would be attentive, serious. If one should tell you that the greatest part of this congregation were to be visited, though insensible of it, with a dangerous disease, those that did not discover it would certainly die, and should offer symptoms to discover it; would not every one be fearful, careful, diligent in attending? So it is here.

Signs from the nature of the union in general.

1. Separation from that which is at great distance from Christ; nothing is further distant from Christ than sin; he that is in Christ is separated from sin, in judgment, affection, practice; judges it dangerous, deformed, bitter, nothing more, not afflictions, &c. He that thinks sin profitable, lovely, pleasing, is out of Christ.

Affection. He sorrows, mourns in secret, weeps with a broken heart, as for an only son, Zech. xii. 10; shame, not in respect of men only, but God, as against mercy. Fear, not as it brings ruin, but as it separates from Christ, suspends his influence, &c. Hatred, not anger only; hate it as sin, all sin; seeks its ruin.

Practice. Avoids it, all occasions; flies from it as from a serpent; if once overtaken, seldom twice, with the same sin. He that lives in sin, commits the same sin often, drunkenness, whoredom, Sabbath breaking, cozening, omission of duties, public or private, is not in Christ. If you are in Christ, you do not absent from ordinances, frequent bad company. 2 Tim. ii. 19, the Lord will own none for his, nor should any profess the name of Christ, much less pretend to union with him, who departs not from all iniquity; from all, quite a great way, from the sight and occasions, Acts iii. 26. It is a blessed fruit of this union to turn from his iniquities, those wherein you have lived and delighted, 1 John iii. 6, *ἐν τοῖς ἀμαρτίαις, i. e. non dat operam peccato. Non simplex actio, sed cum studio et voluptate conjuncta*; if conscience condemn you of wilful and customary omissions or commissions, ye need no further inquiry.

2. *Likeness.* Where there is oneness, there must be likeness. He that is in Christ is one with him, therefore like him in graces, affections, actions; such virtues, and so exercised.

Virtue. 1 Peter i. 15, and ii. 9, as not of equality, but resemblance; contempt of the world, self-denial, humility.

Christ condemned the world. The world loved not him, nor he it; cared not for him, nor he for it; the riches, honours, pleasures of it were contemptible to him. What do ye most desire, that one thing only or principally? What do ye esteem? What do ye value yourselves and others by? What do you pursue in the first place? If it be the world, you are its children, not the members of Christ.

Self-denial. Christ sought not his own will, nor his own glory, John v. 41, John xiv. 14. What do ye when God's will and yours come in competition? What is your design, your interests, or his glory; pleasing and advancing yourselves, or honouring him?

Humility. Mat. xi. 29, those that are come to Christ have learned this. Are you cross, furious, impatient, revengeful, trample on inferiors, despise equals, undervalue superiors? Do you make yourselves a rule to others, and condemn those who are not of your mind and way, or it may be of your humour? Does your humility spring from the lowliness of your outward condition, or sense of sinfulness, misery, spiritual wants, free mercy, unworthiness? Do you receive the word with meekness, as new born babes, willing to be guided, to submit to it? Acting with delight, do you count it your meat and drink to do the will of God? Have you such objects for your affections as Christ, delight in saints, in soul prosperity? &c.

8. *Propinquity.* Union implies this. Those that are far off from Christ are not in him. Are you continually with him by thoughts? These present Christ to us, and make us present with him. Are thoughts of Christ more frequent, delightful, consistent than of others? Is he not in all your thoughts? Do ye crowd out these? Are they strangers, or unwelcome? He is most where Christ is most, i. e. in his ordinances, in his banqueting house, sits down under Christ's shadow with great delight. How are you affected to the ordinances, praying, hearing? Are they dear, sweet, desirable? Is one day in the house of God better than a thousand, as it was to David? Ps. lxxiv. 10. Do you thirst for the Sabbath ere it come? And why? Not for other respects, but Christ's presence? Do you omit wilfully, or upon small occasions? Are they tedious? Do you complain of length in others, and curtail yours? Is idleness or worldly employments more pleasing? 'When will the Sabbath be done?' Those that are united are always in him, with him, but this union and presence is not always alike manifested. The sense and comfort of it is to be found in ordinances, hence esteem, desires: 'When shall I come and appear?' Ps. xlii. 2, Ps. xxvii. 4.

4. *Adherence to Christ.* This is included in union; for it is not a corporeal, essential, or personal union, but rather moral and spiritual. And this union is better expressed by adherence than inherence; the soul spiritually cleaving to Christ, and clinging about him, and a strong tendency to more intimacy, fear of estrangement and separation. Does your soul cling to Christ, clasp about him, as ivy about the oak? If you have no strong inclinations after him, and resolutions to cleave to him, as in Ruth, chap. i. 16; if you are not fearful to offend, careful to avoid all unkindnesses that may alienate from him; if you refuse to hear, or answer not his call, accept not his invitations, slight his messages, reject his motions, refuse admission to him, can be content without his company; if anything else will please you in his absence, then you are not in him.

5. *Participation of Christ.* He that is in Christ partakes of the nature and influence of Christ, as the branch of the nature and sap of the tree, Rom.

xi. 17. A branch of a wild olive, grafted into a true olive, partakes of the root and fatness thereof, changes its nature, &c. If Christ be in you, there is such a change, as the Scripture expresses, sometimes by creation, 2 Cor. v. 17, Gal. vi. 15; by renovation, Rom. xii. 2, Titus iii. 5; by generation, Gal. iv. 19, John iii. 8; born of God, 1 John iii. 9; born of the Spirit, John xvi. Is Christ formed in you? Have you experience of the pangs of the new birth? Is there an universal change? Are old things passed away, and all things become new,—mind, apprehension? Can you see spiritual things more clearly? Col. iii. 10. Have you a new judgment of persons, things, state, actions? Is your conscience tender? Does it smite you sooner and more for small, secret evils, such as others make nothing of? Is your will pliable to good, inflexible to evil? Have you new intentions, resolutions, affections well fixed, moderated to lawfulness? Is your conversation not worldly, sensual, profane, &c.? Is it such as becomes the gospel, adorned with the fruits of holiness and righteousness?

6. *Sympathy with Christ.* Co-suffering, and sense of his suffering. He that is in Christ will be sensible of what is done against him. Christ's sufferings for men are finished, but his sufferings by men are still continued, blasphemies, reproaches, contempts, opinions and practices dishonourable to Christ. Those, then, who make Christ suffer, are not in him. Those who deny his glory, profane his name, condemn his words, slight his beauty and love, and the expressions of it, desert his ways of truth or holiness. Those who are not sensibly affected with these in others do not mourn in secret, Ps. lxxix. 9, Rom. xv. 8, prefer it not before their own credit and interests. But such as are as tender of the honour and interest of Christ, as if it were their own, resent it, as though their own reputation and interest suffered thereby, are in him.

The ligaments and bonds of this union are uniting graces, faith and love. Faith unites Christ to us, and love unites us to Christ. Christ dwelleth in us by faith, Eph. iii.; and we dwell in him by love, 1 John iv. 16.

Love. He that is in Christ loves him; he that is so near Christ, sees and tastes that which constrains him to love. This is a sure character of love which Christ gives, John xiv. 15, 'Keep my commandments.' This is not only a sign of love, but union: 1 John iii. 24, 'He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him.' Is this your resolution, as it was David's? Ps. cxix. 106. When you read and hear as they, Jer. xlii. 5, 6, do you resolve sincerely what they did but feignedly? Do you labour to convince your judgments, make your hearts submit, and your lives conformable? What is your custom, after conviction and clear manifestation of God's will? Do ye forget, or neglect, run cross to it, put it off with excuses, say, The Lord is not so strict as you are made to believe; you see none so obedient, or time enough hereafter, or the Lord be merciful to me in this, I may be saved though I be not so punctual?

Delight. Ps. cxli. 1, 'Delighteth greatly,' &c.; as much as formerly in pursuing carnal designs. Is it your meat and drink to do his will? or are his commandments grievous, hard sayings, the land cannot bear them? Are all his ways pleasant, those commands that cross your interests, lusts, humours? Do you not overlook the least, nor excuse you from the most weighty, nor waive the strictest?

Faith. He that is not in the faith, is not in Christ. Now faith, to describe it in its lowest degree, is a consent to take Christ as God offers him. He offers him, not only as a Priest, but a King, both as a Prince and a Saviour. Are you as willing that Christ should rule you as save you? Do you desire as truly to be freed from sin as from hell? Is the filthiness of

sin grievous, and not only the guilt and damnation of it? Do you desire holiness as truly as heaven; not content with pardon without purity? Is the dominion of sin as terrible as its wages? If you divide what God has joined in offering Christ, you have not received him; if you care not for Christ at all, or desire him only to save you from hell, can be content to live without Christ all your lives, and desire him only at death to free you from misery and wrath to come; if the sceptre, the yoke, the strict ways, the holy paths of Christ, be not desirable in your account, you have no reason to think you are in Christ. Resolve this question, If you might be assured that you should never be damned for your sins, would you leave sin? Or thus, If you might be saved without holiness, would you desire holiness? Would you follow it?

2. Characters from metaphors. That in the text, Christ is the vine, believers branches. By such means as you may discover a branch to be in the vine, you may know if you be in Christ. There are three signs; growth, pruning, fruitfulness.

(1.) *Growth.* That branch which grows not is either dead or separated from the vine. If you stand still, or run round in a circle of duties, without making any progress, if you grow not better every day proportionably to the means, mercy, light that you enjoy, you are not in Christ. You hear, that is better, &c., but are you improved by hearing? Do you hear with understanding, increase in knowledge? Does your light beget heat, kindle your affections? and do you manifest it in your conversation, walking answerable to the gospel?

You pray; but do you pray every day better, more fervently with the heart, from a sense of spiritual wants, so sensibly and importunately, as one ready to famish cries for bread, pinched with soul wants, as one fainting for thirst? Do you pray more spiritually; earnest not only for temporals, but spirituals; not only to be freed from hell, but to be made fit for heaven; as much for holiness as happiness? You have good motions sometimes, what becomes of them? Do you nourish them till they grow into resolutions? and do not these end but in endeavours? and are your endeavours visible in your life? Those that are in Christ grow daily in all things, Eph. iv. 15. Those that grow worse, or not better, or not in the best, in grace, in knowledge, from good materially, to good in principle and manner, are not in Christ.

(2.) *Pruning*, John xv. 2. The husbandman will not take pains to cut off luxuriances from branches that are withered or broken off, he prunes only those in the vine. Has the Father pruned you, cut off all inordinate motions from your hearts, and acts from your lives, or cut them so as they cannot grow? Are all actions exorbitant, such as become not a holy profession, cut off, separated from your conversation? 1 Cor. vi. 9-11; Eph. iv. 22. Is all corrupt communication cut off from your lips? Eph. iv. 29. Not profane, unclean, deceitful, but good, edifying, gracious. Are sinful thoughts, projects, reasonings, cut off from your minds? 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. If in Christ, all are subject to him, no speculative wickedness, no providing for the flesh, Rom. xiii. 14, no reasoning against Christ, &c. Are all inordinate affections cut off from the heart? Gal. v. 24. Have you no delight in sin, to act or remember it, no desire to return to Egypt, no lusting after the flesh-pots, no love to the world, no more than it hath to Christ? John xv. 19; Col. iii. 5-9. Are you mortified, crucified, dead to old lusts, take no more pleasure in them than Abraham in Sarah when dead? Gen. xxiii. 4. Would you have them dead and buried, not in hopes of a resurrection, but so as not to rise again? Are your lusts alive? Do you act them openly; or if there be some restraints upon outward acts, fear, or shame, or other carnal, selfish

enforcements, do you nourish them in your thoughts. Do they live, and move, and command in your affections? Do covetousness, uncleanness, intemperance, pride, malice, &c., live within you, though they appear not as formerly in your lives?

(8.) *Fruitfulness.* That branch is in the vine that is fruitful, beareth not only leaves, but fruit, good, ripe, seasonable, and much. He is only in Christ that is fruitful, John xv. 2, 4, 5; filled with 'the fruits of righteousness,' Phil. i. 11; 'the fruits of the Spirit,' Gal. v. 22. He that is fruitful has every grace, and the exercise, the acts of every grace; both confidence and humility, hope and fear, joy and sorrow, spiritual poverty and contentment, heavenly-mindedness and diligence in his particular calling, love and hatred.

Acts. These are actually fruits; grace, but fundamentally. Without the acts of grace you are no more fruitful than a vine in winter. Many acts, much fruit.

Are you acquainted with the life of faith; not only faith to make you alive, but faith to live by? To live by faith is to make every act of life an act of faith; to pray in faith, hear, walk, work, eat in faith; act it on all its objects, attributes, offices of Christ, promises, relations, providences, experiences, functions of the Spirit, the person of Christ; in all its acts, recumbency, application, confidence. Do you cast yourselves, and the burthen of your affairs upon God, and there rest? What then means these torturing cares and indirect means? Do you use to apply promises particularly, do all in the strength of the promise? And rises it so high as triumph over dangers, doubts, difficulties? Can you trust him with all, for all temporals as well as spirituals, and upon disadvantage? Do you walk in fear, as seeing him who is invisible, with awful apprehensions, reverence, holy abasement?

Do you act it on all its objects; not only justice, but glory, mercy, purity, omniscieny? Do you fear, not only to suffer, but to offend; and that because it is a dishonour, contrary to his pure nature, and a base return for mercy?

Love. Do you know the constraints of love? Is there a vein of love runs in every act, to make it sprightly and lively? Do you hear his voice because you love him, seek his face because you love him, relieve his members because you love him, think and speak of him because you love him? Are you diligent in worldly affairs because you would be serviceable, and desire to be serviceable out of love? Are you diligent in holy duties because you would enjoy him, and desire to enjoy him out of love? Is your design and endeavour an act of love, in acts natural, civil, religious? Are you diligent in doing, and ready and cheerful to suffer, out of love? Is it your grief and affliction that you fall short hereof, and do you count it your happiness to be always under the constraints of love, to have your whole life influenced by it?

2. Metaphor. Believers are in Christ as stones in a building, whereof Christ is sometimes called the corner stone, Mat. xi. 42, Acts iv. 11, Eph. ii. 20; sometimes the foundation, 1 Cor. iii. 11; they are 'living stones,' 1 Peter ii. 4, 5. This affords three characters: 1. stedfastness; 2. dependance; 3. uniformity.

(1.) *Stedfastness.* A stone laid upon a sure foundation in a well compacted structure is not easily moved. One in Christ is stedfast, unmoveable, not tossed with every wind of doctrine, nor overthrown with every temptation. Do you yield to sins that have no visible temptation, as swearing; or to temptations at the first motion and assault, in judgment or practice? Are

you overthrown by weak temptations, such as nature can resist, such as have no advantage from within? Do you fall frequently? Is your life a falling-sickness? or do you return to it when temptation returns? Loose stones may be removed at pleasure.

(2.) *Dependence.* Stones in a building depend one on another, all upon the foundation. Their strength is dependence. Is yours so? Do you live in continual dependence on Christ? Being sensible of weakness to bear Christ's yoke, do you run to him for support? In sense of difficulties in holy actings, sense of your impotency, convinced that no strength is sufficient, but some without, and that only in Christ; is your constant recourse to him upon all occasions for it? Is your life a leaning upon Christ; as the spouse? Cant. viii. 5. Do you make new applications to him in all your undertakings, sighing after him, resting on him? Do you do all in his strength?

(3.) *Uniformity.* It is a curious structure, a temple. In such buildings the stones are uniform; not one part rough and another polished, but all regular. Do you make conscience of all sins, all duties, to avoid the one, to perform the other? Do you not leave one sin to live in another, gross, secret, beloved, common? Do you not do one duty, and omit another, but do all public and private, and secret meditation, heart-searching examination, self-judging, secret mourning, strict watch over heart and ways, inward motions, and outward acts; not acts of common honesty only, but charity, by relief, and by counsel, admonition, and reproof? And acts of piety, do you not hear only, but attend, believe, remember, meditate, practise? Do you not pray only, but watch, trust, expect, and conform your life to your prayers? *Quicquid fit propter Deum, æqualiter fit.* What is done out of respect to God, is done equally, uniformly. He that does any part of his will sincerely for him, out of respect to him, will decline no part of his will, have respect to all.

Use of Exhortation. To get into Christ.

Motive. The strongest is necessity, here is the greatest. If you do not, you are most miserable; if you do, you are most happy.

The misery of not being in Christ appears from the former discourse; and further, from ver. 6, 'If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.'

(1.) *Cast forth, ἐκβάλλεται ἔξω.* Cast out of God's favour, no good word, kind look, gracious act; out of his household, not his servants; he that commits sin is the servant of sin. Out of Christ's jurisdiction, not his subjects, but rebels, will not have him for their King; not his disciples, but Satan's, will not have him for their Prophet. He will not be their Priest: shall they have benefit by his sufferings, who continue to make him suffer? Nor shall they partake in his intercession; he prays for none but those that are in him, or in the way to him. 'I pray not for the world, but for those that thou hast given me out of the world,' John xvii. 9.

(2.) *Withered, ἐξηράνεται.* No beauty, no more than we see in a withered stick; no life, dead, alienated from the life of God, Eph. iv. They live the life of the devil; no leaves, nothing to shroud from wrath, hide from justice; no fruit but fruits to death, pernicious fruit, such as endangers the tree that bears it; such as Deut. xxxii. 82, 'The vine is the vine of Sodom,' &c.; useless, Ezek. xv. 2, 8; obnoxious, Isa. v. 4-6; and good reason, for it dishonours God, ver. 8.

(3.) *Men gather them, ἐνδύονται.* As men gather dried sticks, so the devils gather wicked men. As good angels are employed about saints, so

the devils about these. They are excommunicated in the court of heaven from society with angels and saints; delivered over to Satan, to be ruled and rewarded by him. He abides in Christ, in whom Christ's words abide. By the same reason Satan abides in them, because his words, his suggestions abide in them. 'His ye are whom you obey.' There are but two commanders in the world, the God of heaven, and the god of the world. He has soul-possession, if not bodily, dwells in them, and acts them: as the Holy Spirit acts the saints, so the evil spirits these. Satan 'works effectually in the children of disobedience.' They are gathered, and bound over by Satan to the great session.

(4.) *Cast into the fire, εις πυρ βάλλεσθαι.* This is the doom, and will be the end of all that continue out of Christ, barrenness entitles them to it: Heb. vi. 8, 'That which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.'

(5.) *Burn them, καίεσθαι.* Keep them in the fire till they be burned. Those that continue out of Christ will not only be cast into the fire, but kept there burning; only with this difference from other withered branches, though they shall be always burning, yet they will never be consumed.

2. The happiness of those that are in Christ. Take all the branches in one bundle: that expression, 'If you abide in me,' &c., 'Ask what you will,' ver. 7, 'and it shall be given you,' a large grant as the heart of a man or angel can desire; not as Ahasuerus to Esther, v. 8, 'Ask to the half of my kingdom;' but what you will, heaven, or earth, or both, and all in both: if it be good, that is the only limitation, and this does not straiten the privilege, but enhance the worth of it. That which is not good, is not worth asking or giving. So the sense is this, 'Ask what you will,' if it be worth asking, if it be worth giving. Oh the sweetness, the largeness of this privilege, the happiness of those that partake of it! This grant, as it is large, so secure, the best security in heaven, the bond of Christ, his word, promise, obligation; no other condition of it but this, 'If you abide in me.' If a great prince, rich, powerful, should make such a promise, ask my son, my kingdom, my treasure, all that I have or can do; how happy would we think the condition of such a favourite! Nay, they have not only this happiness by way of promise, in words, *de futuro*, but actually, in hand, in words, *de presenti*. 'All are yours, ye are Christ's, 1 Cor. iii. 23. Interest in him gives interest in all; union with him, possession of all. *All* is an exposition of *what ye will*. Man's desires are infinite, nothing will satisfy but *all*; therefore Christ, who is determined to enhappy all his, will satisfy their desires to the utmost, and gives all, all that heart can desire; himself, and all with him.

All that he is, as God; his attributes, essence, subsistence; as mediator, his offices, your king, priest, prophet, and the acts of it; as man, his mind; he is ever mindful of you, you are never out of his thoughts, Isa. xlix. 15. His heart, his affections, more tender and endeared than in any creature. Love, 'As the Father loves me,' John xv. 9, John xvii. 26; love not equally, but as truly, really, effectually, certainly, unchangeably. Delight, 'All his delight is with the sons of men,' Ps. x. 3, Prov. viii. 81. Compassion; for this end he assumed our nature, Heb. ii. 17. Joy, 'as a bridegroom over the bride,' Isa. lxii. 5. Oh what happiness! Surely this is the joy of heaven, yet you have it here.

All that he doth. His administrations on earth,* John xvii. 18, 19; his intercession in heaven, he now lives, &c. It is the end of his life in heaven.

All that he suffered. He was wounded for their transgressions; and that he purchased by sufferings, pardon, peace, grace, glory.

All that he hath, even from his throne to his footstool : Rev. iii. 21, 'To Him that overcometh, will I grant to sit on my throne.' His footstool : Mat. v. 5, 'Blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth ;' 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things ;' not only peace, and plenty, and glory, but his peace : John xiv. 24, 'My peace I give unto you.' His fulness, the fulness of God, Eph. iii. 19, John i. 16, 'of his fulness.' His glory, John xvii. 22 ; his joy, ver. 11. All that he hath in heaven or earth, your Father, your portion ; the Holy Ghost your comforter, teacher, John xiv. 26 ; the angels your attendants, your guard, Mat. iv. 6, Ps. xci. 12 ; the saints your brethren, your fellow-members, first fruits, Gal. iii. 28. Ye are all one in Christ Jesus, part of the same crop with those that are in heaven, only they are first reaped.

All in earth, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 'or the world, or life, or death, or things present,' &c.

All that he is, so far as it is communicable, and you capable ; all that he doth, or can do, if good for you ; 'no good thing will he withhold from them' that love him, Ps. lxxxiv. 11, and xxxiv. 10. All the difficulty is, whether can better judge what is best, God or ourselves. Oh what tempting happiness is he ! Can the world, or sin, or Satan, promise or secure such things ? 'Will the son of Jesse give you fields and vineyards ? 1 Sam. xiii. 7.

Obj. But how shall we get into Christ ?

Direct. The best I can prescribe is shewing the way by which the Lord brings men to Christ. No man comes except the Father draw him, and he draws by degrees.

1. *Illumination.* Opens the eye to see sin, sees it with another light ; sets them in order before him, shews him the face of his soul in the glass of the law, the sins of his nature and life ; leads him into every part of his soul and life, as he did, Ezek. viii., still greater abominations ; brings to his mind sins past, and makes him possess them ; opens the bag where they are sealed, lets him see what a woful treasure there is ; shews him the number and weight, so that he sees cause to complain with David, Ps. xxxviii. 4, 'Mine iniquities are gone over my head ; as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.' Various in degrees, not alike in all as to degrees.

2. *Humiliation* under the sense of sin's desert. Sees all the curses and threatenings bent against him, levelled at him, justice ready to discharge, wrath hastening justice ; applies threatenings to himself, the soul that sins shall die, is cursed, condemned ; conscience is awakened, sensible of the burden, groans under it ; the sting of guilt pricks his heart, as theirs, Acts ii. 27 ; conscience is wounded, sometimes so deeply, as ready to faint ; the burden of wrath lies so heavy, as makes him ready to sink. Hence horror, a degree of hell ; fear, a spirit of bondage. Sees himself at the brink of hell, ready each moment to fall in. Herein the Lord proceeds with some variety ; all are not humbled alike, some more deeply, some less ; but all have some sense of their misery, so as to be apprehensive of an absolute necessity of Christ.

3. *Self-renunciation.* Renouncing his own righteousness, despairing that any thing he hath, or can do, will remove this misery, pacify wrath, expiate guilt, and counting all loss. Men convinced of wrath and misery are apt to inquire with the jailor, 'What shall I do to be saved ?' and take up resolutions to pray, hear, &c., hereby to pacify God ; but when he intends union, he takes away these rotten supports, to make way for Christ ; convinces that nothing he can do is available ; not the fruit of the body, nor rivers of oil ; not good nature, well-meanings, holy duties ; all are as men-

struous cloths; none but Christ. These must be pared off before there be engrafting.

4. *Hope.* Though he makes him despair of himself; yet he leaves him not to despair of God, raises some weak hopes from the mercies of God: 'He wills not the death of a sinner.' General offers of Christ: 'He came to save sinners,' to 'seek and save that which was lost,' and why not me? says the humbled soul. From examples in Scripture and experience, the Lord pardoned such grievous sins and sinners, who knows but he may pardon me? It may be he will. He cannot, dare not say at first, he hath pardoned, or will pardon; but it may be he will. From absolute promises, 'though their sins be as red as scarlet,' 'I will blot out their iniquities for my name's sake.' There is some hope concerning this.

5. *Desires after Christ.* These are virtually faith, when strong, spiritual, sincere, constant, insatiable. When I desire him, as one almost famished for bread, as the hart panteth for water, as one under a pressing burden for ease; as one dangerously wounded, and grievously pained, for cure; as one in danger of death, for life, 'skin for skin,' &c. Let me be poor, if I may have interest in Christ's treasures; let me be hated, persecuted of all, if Christ will pity me, love me; let me be banished from friends and comforts, if Christ dwell with me; let me be nothing, have nothing, if Christ will be mine; let God deny me what he will, if he give me Christ; let him dispose of me as he pleases for temporals, only let me live, let my soul live. Oh that I might have Christ, though I suffer, die, go through hell to him! These bring along with them,

6. *Consent to take him upon his own terms.* He thinks them propounded easy, embraces them with all his heart. No terms could be so grievous but he would accept them; he closes with Christ, clasps about him, resolves never to part. This is actual faith, and then actual faith makes us one with Christ, brings us actually to him.

Use. If those that are without Christ can do nothing, then they are deceived who ascribe to man's will unrenewed, such a power, as to that which is spiritual and saving, as is inconsistent with what Christ here tells us. They say man's will can do much herein, without Christ's special influence. Christ himself tells us, 'without him he can do nothing,' and the apostles after him, Eph. ii., Phil. ii. 13, 2 Cor. iii. 5. This is enough to crush that conceit of the power of free will, advanced first by the Pelagians of old, who were therefore branded as the enemies of the grace of Christ, and revived in later times by the Arminians, the Socinians, and the Jesuits, who all are zealots for it. And indeed it is of great moment, and of large influence. Luther called it *fundamentum totius papismi*, the groundwork of all popery.

The words of Christ in the text are a full confutation of it. I need add no more to dissuade those from it who are tender of the honour of Christ, and the glory of his grace, but only to let you understand what it is, and help you to see into the inwards of it; for I cannot much fear that any amongst us will be taken with it, but because they do not well understand it; pride in the learned, and ignorance in others, are the great advantages of it.

I will therefore endeavour to open it to you as briefly and plainly as the matter will admit. The glory of Christ, the interest of souls (who are concerned to give him the honour of his grace) and the vindication of the text I have insisted on, require this of me.

Free will, in the sense of those who maintain it, is a power in the will to incline either way, when that which is supernatural and saving is offered as its object; a power and freedom in the will to choose or refuse, to yield or resist, to embrace or reject, as it list. So that this with them is twofold.

1. *To refuse or resist.* We say as to this, The will of a natural man may, and does, resist common motions or offers of grace, but not those that are special, viz., when the Lord puts forth the power of his grace with an intent to convert a sinner, then the will does not, cannot resist.

They say when the Lord and the power of his grace has done all that it can do, all that he is ever wont to do, the will ordinarily does, and always can resist it; so that if we will believe them, we must believe that when the Lord has done what he can, the will can do what it list. And so it must be free, so far as not to be subjected to the dominion and power of God; he cannot rule, or move it otherwise than it list; if it should be more than thus subjected to him, it would be destroyed. It is essential to the will to have a power to resist God, do what he can, unless he would take away the nature and being of it. This is the true visage of their opinion (in the first branch of it); if you will see it plain and naked, there needs no dirt to be cast upon it to render it odious.

2. *To choose, or embrace.* The will, they say, can incline to that which is spiritually and supernaturally good. They speak not of a capacity, which is not denied, but of an active power. A natural man, by the power of his will, as he can reject Christ, so he can embrace him; as he can resist converting grace, so he can yield to it as he will; the will can incline itself to this as well as the other. This is a true representation of their opinion in the other branch of it. Against which we say,

(1.) This is to deny original corruption (which is the foundation of all the doctrine of grace comprised in the gospel, for it all depends upon a supposal of the corruption of our natures), for if the will can incline itself to that which is spiritually good, it is not habitually inclined to evil only, it is not fixedly averse to supernatural good; and if we be not so inclined to evil, and so averse to good, our natures are not corrupted.

(2.) This is to deny the necessity of regeneration, which is the ground of all the benefits and privileges we have by Christ, the first stone in the structure, without which none of the other have place, for if the will can incline itself to spiritual good, it needs not regenerating grace to incline it; if it can incline itself to holiness, it needs no inward principle of holiness to incline it.

To solve this (that I may not conceal from you the best they have to say for themselves) they tell us, the will is not inclined but by the help of grace, that gives it power. But what is that which they call grace? Let that be minded. They say it is a common enlightening of the mind to discern the object, and a moral excitement or inviting of the will by arguments and rational inducements. Such grace, they say, the Lord affords to all indifferently, and it is all that he gives or does to the will of any one in order to conversion. Those that use this grace right, are converted; those that do not, are not.

To this we say, that such grace gives no strength to the will, but supposes it able already. He that holds forth a light to a man lying on the ground, and moves him with arguments to rise and walk, does not thereby give him legs, or strength, but supposes he has these already; so that his grace, such as it is, being supposed, still no room is left for original corruption, no need of regeneration; nor will Christ be the cause of conversion, the author of faith or holiness, and the efficacy of his grace shall depend upon the will of man. Grant the best they can allege, all these absurd and dangerous things must be allowed, if we will allow their opinion.

[1.] There will be no original corruption. For if the will be corrupted through original sin, that which helps it must take away the prevalency of

this corruption ; but such a grace as they tell us of, is of no such use or tendency ; nor do they pretend that it heals the corrupted will, for they rather freely confess that there is no corruption in the will of a natural man.

[2.] The necessity of regeneration is for the implanting of gracious qualities in the soul, and especially in the will (that being the principal seat of all grace), that it may be possessed with the principles of faith, repentance, holiness ; that by virtue of them it may be inclined to suitable acts ; since, in every state, the will inclines according to the quality of it ; nor can the fruit (the acts) be good, till the tree be good. But they do not pretend that their moral grace does implant any such gracious qualities or principles in the will ; nay, they contend there needs no such quality in the will ; the will can, and does, incline itself without it, and so no need of regeneration.

[3.] This, we say, makes Christ not to be the worker or real cause of conversion or regeneration, nor the author or giver of faith, repentance, holiness ; which appears several ways ; for since what Christ does for us this way is only, as they say, by this suasive or exciting grace,

First, He does not work conversion, but only invite to it ; not *efficere*, but *suadere*. He is not the worker of it, but a persuader to it, and that for the most part ineffectually ; moves the will so as it needs not to be moved, and commonly is not ; effects not our conversion or regeneration, but only excites us to do it ourselves.

Secondly, This way (which is all they leave them) he neither gives the power nor the act.

First, Not the *power*, for suasive grace gives no more the power to yield than resist, but leaves the will, as they say, indifferent. Besides, this exciting grace supposes a sinner has the power already, and needs not giving, but only exciting. He that thinks it enough to shew a man his business, and persuade him to work, doth not thereby give him strength, but supposes he has it beforehand.

Secondly, He gives not the *act* or the willingness, for that which gives or works the act determines the will, or causes it to determine itself. But this which they call grace brings it only to the will's choice, and leaves it indifferent to act or not to act ; and so, no more works the one than the other, and is no more the cause that it acts than that it acts not. They say God will convert us if we will (neither desires nor promises it absolutely), so that the will must be from us ; but if we be willing we are actually converted, and so the act of conversion is from us.

(3.) This grace of theirs is given equally to all, and effects no more in one than another. Therefore Christ, in this respect, is no more the cause of conversion in these that turn to God than in these who are never converted ; he works regeneration no more in those that are sanctified than in the unregenerate, *i. e.* he works it not at all, he is no cause of it. He gives faith and repentance no more to those who believe and repent than to those who persevere in impenitency and unbelief ; he gave faith no more to Paul than to Judas ; he gave repentance no more to Peter than to Simon Magus, *i. e.* he gave it not at all ; for he does no more for any than this moral grace will do, and all have this alike.

(4.) This makes the efficacy of the grace of Christ to depend upon the will of man. That grace which they say is sufficient, if we will, becomes effectual ; if we will not, it is of no effect. And so it is 'of him that willeth,' and not 'of God that shews mercy,' in making his grace effectual, Rom. ix. 16.

To help all this, some of them say there is another sort of grace, which they call subsequent and co-operating, by virtue of which they would have it thought that the Lord may be said to be the author of conversion. But this

latter grace comes too late to be counted the cause of conversion, for, as they state it, it is not vouchsafed till the will have determined itself, therefore it is called subsequent. It concurs not with us till we are willing; the determination of the will is before it in order of nature. None have this grace (according to this method) but those who make right use of the former preventing grace; and right use is not made of that but when the will yields to the invitation, and gives its consent. Now, when the will yields and gives its consent, the soul is converted already; and so this grace which follows such consent cannot be the cause of conversion, unless that can be called the cause which is after the effect.

All that can be made hereof is this: the Lord by his grace helps to convert us when we are already converted; he gives us faith if we believe beforehand; he quickens us when [we] are already alive; he helps us to rise out of this state of sin and impenitence, when we are already risen! It is we that do the work first; he helps us in it afterward! If you can digest this, you may swallow their doctrine.

Thus have I truly shewed you what the patrons of free will hold and assert in opposition to the text. It exempts man's will from the dominion of God, it denies original sin, it leaves no need of regeneration, it takes from Christ the honour of being the author of our conversion, the giver of saving blessings; it subjects his grace to the sovereignty of man's will, so that it shall have no efficacy but as we list.

I need not lay any colours on it to make it look ugly. It detracts from Christ to exalt nature; it takes the crown from effectual victorious grace, and sets it upon the head of free will; it makes Christ and his grace in a manner needless, as to the restoring of our souls to life; it is but little that he does, and that to no purpose, unless we will. And if we will, we well nigh do it all ourselves. Thus must we conclude if we believe them. But if we believe Christ, without him we can do nothing.

Obj. If it be impossible to do anything out of Christ, then it is in vain to endeavour. If no possibility, why should we hope? If no hope, no endeavours; despair, or be careless.

Ans. 1. It is our duty to endeavour what is impossible by our endeavours to attain, so sin has made it; to avoid all sin, to perform perfect obedience, to love God with all the heart and strength. It is our duty to endeavour the continuance of those things we cannot possibly lose; *Ergo*, not absurd to endeavour the attainment of what is impossible. It was not possible that Herod should murder Christ in his infancy; yet Joseph used means to avoid it, fled to Egypt, was so commanded. It is not possible the elect should be seduced, fall away totally and finally; yet they are to use all means to prevent it. Necessity is a sufficient reason to act without further encouragement. A man in a river, ready to drown, will endeavour to save his life, though some should tell him it were impossible. There is a necessity where there is a command from God; now he requires, it behoves man to do his duty, and leave the success to God. Secret things do belong to God, Deut. xxx. 29; things future are secrets, events are future; present known duties belong to us. If it be not possible to attain happiness by our endeavours only, yet it is possible to attain it some other way. Do what he requires, and he will do what is best; leave him to find the way who made it.

Ans. 2. Though one out of Christ can do nothing spiritually good, yet he may do something preparatory. There are some things attainable by a natural man, which may be called preparations for Christ. Though they be not causes, nor necessary antecedents of conversion or union, yet are disposing occasions, and have a probable, though not a necessary, connection

with these. Those that attain them may miss of Christ, but it is probable they will not.

This is great encouragement to endeavour; they are very desirable, and withal attainable. It is in his sphere, this should be his *palestra*. I shall shew, 1, what these things are; 2, that one out of Christ may do them; 3, there is a probability they will succeed; 4, if they succeed not to the utmost, yet they are not in vain.

1. (1.) Knowledge of man's sinfulness and misery by nature out of Christ; sinfulness of nature and acts; misery, curse, wrath, present and to come. Knowledge of justice and the law: what that requires and forbids; and of justice, what it is ready to execute.

(2.) Conviction that he in particular is so sinful and miserable; wrought by application of what he knows in general to his own state: I am the man who am thus sinful, and therefore who am thus obnoxious to justice and wrath.

(3.) Sense of his misery. Letting his thoughts dwell so long upon it, till his heart be affected with what his understanding apprehends; till the notion beget affection, some sense thereof, fear of wrath, justice, threatenings, curses, lest they should be executed, sadness, consternation of spirit, dejection, humiliation of heart, and all high thoughts of his good and safe condition cast down, and himself laid with them in the dust, manifested by sighing under the burden of wrath, lamenting his sad condition.

(4.) Desire of freedom from this misery, serious wishes to be delivered from the wrath to come; not to come into that place of torment, not to dwell with everlasting burnings.

(5.) Believe that Christ only can free him; no name under heaven but this. Nothing that himself hath, or can do, or any other for him, can deliver him; none but Christ.

(6.) Diligent use of outward means where Christ is to be found: hear, pray, read, meditate, confer.

(7.) Outward reformation.

These are the preparations. Now,

2. That they are attainable by one out of Christ is evident, because such a one has all things that are requisite to attain them, which are three: 1, apt, fit means; 2, common assistance; 3, power to use the means.

(1.) He has fit means. *Fit*, i.e. such as have an aptitude (if made use of) to work these effects. The word clearly reveals man's misery, and Christ the only remedy. The word preached, and particularly applied, has an aptitude to convince of sin and misery in particular; and this seriously thought of, and imprinted by meditation, begets sense; from this sense springs desire of freedom, and desires beget endeavours.

(2.) He has common and general assistance. And this is enough (for these being but common works, do not require special assistance), he has it; because common assistance, whether by way of motion or co-operation, is never, or very rarely, denied either to rational or natural agents. If things requisite to an action be ready, and actually applied, and nothing hinder it but want of this divine assistance, the suspending of it is a miracle, which we can never expect. If fire do not burn combustible matter applied to it, it is a miracle, as we have an instance in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. If nourishing meat, received and concocted, do not nourish the body, merely for want of this co-operation, it is no less miraculous. If the eye, rightly disposed, do not see a visible object conveniently placed, merely because divine influence is suspended, it is miraculous. And so if an intelligent man do not understand a plain discourse, merely because God concurs not,

it is no less miraculous. And so in this case, if the means, apt in themselves to work these effects, do not prove effectual, when made use of, if there be no other reason but want of divine assistance, it is a miracle. There is no more reason to fear the want of common assistance, than to hope for miracles; no more ground to deny that, than to affirm this.

(8.) He has power to use the means; for nothing is required to the use thereof but the diligent exercise of reason. No man that thus objects will deny but he has the use of reason, and he cannot deny but he may be as diligent in the exercise of it about this object as about others. Reading, or hearing, and meditating on the word, will work the mentioned effects, and these acts are all within the reach of reason. To do these spiritually indeed requires a higher principle, but a common and rational exercise of these will attain these common works. Though without Christ ye cannot act spiritually, ye may act rationally. Ye may hear what is plainly delivered with understanding, and apply what is spoken in common to your own particulars, by the use of ordinary discourse, and remember what concerns your souls as well as what concerns your estate, and work what you remember upon your hearts, by serious thoughts and meditation; these acts are in the power of an ordinary understanding.

What, then, is the reason that when so many enjoy the gospel, so few reach these common works? It is not want of means, assistance, or power to use means; what then? It is woful negligence, and wilful carelessness; men will not hear, not so much as come; or if they do hear, yet not so much as to hear with understanding and remembrance; apply it not, keep it off as that which belongs not to them, or that which they are afraid of; meditate not, let it not stay in their minds, nor let their thoughts work on it.

This is the true reason why so many perish without excuse; they will not do what they can, and so provoke the Lord not to do for them what they cannot. This is the true, the only reason; others are idle or wicked pretences. And it is little less than blasphemy to accuse the decrees or providences of God as the causes, when negligence only deserves to be counted so. If a man have the use of his hands at command, and meat before him, would it not seem wicked and ridiculous if he should say he could not take the meat because he is not moved from above? When was such a common assistance ever denied? You have the word preached, and understandings capable; why do you not receive it? Is it not plainly because you will not? If a man eat, but force his meat out of his stomach before it be concocted, would it not be both wicked and absurd to say his meat doth not nourish, because God denies to concur with it, whenas the plain reason is his ejecting it? You here receive the bread of life; but by worldly cares and employments, you crowd it out of your souls before it be concocted by meditation; you stop reason in its working, will not employ it to meditate. It is not want of assistance, but want of will and care. You will not do what you can, therefore your destruction is of yourselves; God's justice is clear. This will stop your mouths at the day of judgment. Whatever the heathens have to plead, you will have nothing; but stand speechless, and hear that dreadful sentence passed without excuse. Will it be a sufficient plea to say you would not do what you could, because you could not do what you would; do nothing, because you could not do all; not do your duty, because you could not do what he has reserved in his own power; not obey him in things possible and easy, because he would not suffer you to entrench upon his prerogative? Oh woful plea, which will make your condemnation greater, and add to your torments! But, blessed be God, there is yet time to prevent this, and you see the way. Here is matter for your endeavours, you

need not be idle and careless; yea, and here is matter of hope too. I say not, that if a man do what he can, God ought to give him grace, or will certainly; but only there is hope he will. You need not despair, as appears in the third answer.

8. Though there be no certainty that these preparations will bring you to Christ, yet there is probability they may; though the success of these endeavours be not certain, it is probable. Men count probabilities sufficient grounds to act upon, and indeed moral endeavours have no other encouragement; events are uncertain. But in affairs of the world, if there be one probable way, and no other visible, men never consult whether they shall take that course, but immediately, without delay, fall upon it with all their strength. So Benhadad, 1 Kings xx. 31, 32, 'Peradventure he will save thy life,' &c.; so the lepers, 2 Kings vii. 4, 'If they save us alive, we shall live,' &c.; so the Canaanitish woman, Mat. xv. 26, 27; all upon very weak probabilities. There is no certainty physic will cure a dangerous disease; yet because it is probable, a sick person will take it, though costly and unpleasant. No certainty that industry in a particular calling will make rich; yet because it is probable, men rise early and sit up late, &c. Here is as much probability for your souls, and it is of more concernment, and there is no other way visible that you can walk in.

The probability rises from many grounds.

(1.) It is God's ordinary way whereby he brings men to Christ. It is a great encouragement to a poor pilgrim that he is in the ready way home, though it be possible he may lose it; there is more hopes he may arrive there, than for him who never comes near, is out of it, and goes further and further from it. Those who have these preparations are in the way; those who want and neglect them are out and wander, what hopes of them? A poor prisoner lies in a dungeon many years, and like to do so until he die; a friend comes and shews him a way by which he may probably get out; it is possible the jailor may meet him, and prevent his escape; yet if he try, there is more hopes for him than those who love their dungeon and fetters, and will not stir, nor take a lively* course to escape. It is God's way, therefore hopeful.

(2.) It is a sign God is bringing such to Christ; not an infallible, yet a hopeful, sign, that God will give the end, when he stirs up any to use the means. It is a sign God intends salvation when he sends the gospel; but a more hopeful sign, and that which presages better and more particularly, when the gospel is improved, made use of by any to whom it is sent.

Those who use the means, though such as have but a probable connection with the end, have hopes; those who neglect them are desperate, have no ground to think they should attain the end. Shew us some token for good. There are several tokens: some portend infallibly, some but dubiously and probably. There is certainty from those, hope from these, neither from others.

(3.) These are nearer to Christ and happiness than others, *Ergo*, there is hope. The greatest part of the world are out of Christ; yet there is a latitude, some further off, some nearer. Christ says of one, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven,' Mark xii. 34. Some in the confines of it, some in another world, more hopes for them; some within sight of a city of refuge, others beyond Jordan. We may compare the kingdom of Christ to the temple; the glorified are in the holy of holies, the saints in the holy place, these under preparations in the court, there is more hopes they may get into the sanctuary than those who are in another country or a remote part of the land. There is more hopes, more encouragement for those that are nearer to Christ than for those that are further off.

* Qu. 'likely?'—Ed.

(4.) These are more fit for Christ, more capable of grace than others: these preparations are a comparative capacity, though not absolute, so as never to miss of it; a material and subjective capacity, though not a formal; such disposing occasions as diminish the resistance though not abolish it, more easily reduced: abate something of it, though not quite expel and prevail against it; though all easy to God, yet to us some more, some less. A stone under the instrument of the workman is more capable of a form than a stone in the rock. The Lord indeed is a free agent, and ties not himself to preparations or dispositions, works where and when he pleases; the Spirit blows where it listeth; yet, a vessel in the sea, with sails spread, is in more hopes to get the advantage of a gale than one sticking in the sands without sails; these preparations are as sails spread. The impotent man that lay at the pool of Bethesda, John v., sensible of his infirmity, though he could not go into the pool when the waters were troubled, was more likely to be cured than those who were insensible of their diseases and did not come near the pool. Those that are thus prepared are sensible, and lie at the pool, there is more hopes, they are more capable, &c. Here is a capacity, though remote, more hopeful than none at all.

(5.) Few miscarry that go thus far, therefore there is hopes; few go thus far but go farther, are carried by God to Christ; few in comparison of those who go not so far, and of those who go so far and miscarry. The miscarriage of some merchants upon the seas doth not hinder others from venturing, because they see many grow rich thereby; but if they had no other way to subsist, though more should perish, they would adventure. We can do nothing, all for hopes of a subsistence; when necessity is the greater, the hopes are more; it is a duty necessary, not an employment out of choice. The most successful armies lose some in their conflicts, yet this discourages not the rest from hazarding all to conquer. We run no hazard here; we hazard none if we venture not;* and few perish in comparison of those who conquer; therefore great encouragement to endeavour; and if you do not, you are certain to perish, for anything you can do.

(6.) Those that miscarry are the causes of it themselves; they either despair, or relapse, or resist. The fault is man's.

Despair is very rare and unusual. The Bible, a history of four thousand years, tells us but of two, Cain and Judas. Yet there is more hopes of those that despair, than that senseless presumption affords any ground for, in which most live and die.

Relapse is the ordinary cause, when those who have gone so far omit, negligently perform, those duties in the use of which they arrived at such attainments. They embrace the present world with Demas, choke these motions, drown the voice of conscience, bestow so much time and strength on it as leave none for their souls; return to their vomit, base lusts, sensual pleasures, bad company, resist the common workings of the Spirit, provoke him thereby to add none special. The fault is clearly man's, none else can be accused. God moves not to evil, James i. 13, 14. He is not bound to prevent these miscarriages or their causes. None can oblige God but himself, and he has not engaged himself to anything in nature, or attainable by it. He cures not these distempers, yet he refuses not, but upon man's provocation and desert. He resists, or misimproves, or rejects, common grace and workings: is it not just with God to deny special, saving, irresistible? None miscarry but through their own default, may blame themselves, not God; therefore here is encouragement. If a band of soldiers should be assured that none should perish but those who run away, or revolt to the

* Qu. 'hazard more if we venture not'?—or, 'hazard none if we venture'?—Ed.

enemy, would not this be encouragement to fight to the last? So it is here. If a merchant should be assured that no adventurers make unsuccessful voyages but those who use means to sink their own ship, or those who, repenting their undertaking, return before they arrive at the place whither they are bound, would not this encourage him to adventure?

That you may perceive that what I speak concerning these preparations is far enough from their principles, who advance the power of nature or free-will, to the prejudice of free grace;—

These preparations are not the cause of conversion or union, nor necessary antecedents, so that union and conversion should certainly and unavoidably follow these; nor parts or degrees of regeneration, &c., though steps to it; not *gradus rei*, sed *gradus ad rem*; nor spiritual or supernatural acts, but such as natural men may do with common assistance, such as is common to those who never are converted; nor saving acts, such as pertain to salvation, or are necessarily linked with it, or with a title to it. Nor do they give power to a soul to believe, to turn to God, &c., if he will, yea, or power to be willing. Nor do they oblige the Lord to give Christ or spiritual blessings to such, either in point of faithfulness, as though he had promised it; there is no promise to such of grace to natural acts. Much less in point of justice, as though there were such worth in these to make it due; no, nor in point of equity, as though it were unreasonable, unequal, or incongruous for the Lord to deny regenerating grace to those who are under these preparatives. He may do what he pleases for all this; and what he pleases to do, either to give or deny, it will be highly equal and congruous.

4. Though these endeavours always succeed not to the utmost of what may be expected and desired, yet they are never in vain; for preparations are required and commanded, and industry to attain them is obedience. No man ever lost by obedience in small things; it has a recompense in itself: behold its reward is with it: there are advantages in it, though none should follow it. It is better to be in hell obeying than in heaven rebelling. There is so much sweetness and excellency in obedience, as makes it desirable, and worthy of our best endeavours, without respect to recompense. What greater excellency than conformity to the divine will? And there is no true pleasure in any acts but those that are conformable to it. When Paul says, 'If our hopes were only in this life, we were of all most miserable,' he speaks not his own, but the opinion of the world. For if there were no heaven hereafter, obedience would be a heaven, some part of happiness here. It is true of saints, and in proportion of others.

Yet there are extrinsecal advantages here and hereafter. It is observed that those who have searched after the philosopher's stone, though they have not found it, yet in the inquiry have discovered such rare and pleasing secrets in nature, as may countervail their pains and cost. So here, those that tend toward Christ in these preparatory works, though they find him not, yet have rewards that exceed their pains. Cyrus had temporal promises, Isa. xlv. 28, and xlv. 1, 18. Jehu, for his obedience in destroying idolatry, was invested in a kingdom, and had it established upon his posterity for four generations. Temporal blessings are the proper reward of temporal obedience. God thinks these below that which is spiritual and sincere, therefore saints often have not an equal share thereof with temporary believers: for the future, it has its reward, if not in perfect happiness, yet in more easy sufferings. 'It will be far more tolerable in the day of judgment for,' &c. If they enjoy not more, they shall suffer less.