

A BRIEF EXPOSITION

WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS UPON THE

WHOLE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES.

BY
JOHN COTTON.

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JOHN COTTON.

‘**W**ERE I master,’ says Cotton Mather, ‘of the pen wherewith Palladius embalmed his Chrysostom, the Greek patriarch, or Posidonius eternised his Austin, the Latin oracle, among the ancients; or were I owner of the quill wherewith among the moderns Beza celebrated his immortal Calvin, or Fabius immortalised his venerable Beza; the merits of John Cotton would oblige me to employ it in the preserving his famous memory.’ As we are neither possessed of one or other of these famous biographical pens, nor have space at our disposal for aught like a worthy memoir of this good divine, we shall content ourselves with extracting the record of the principal events of his life from the memoir by his grandson, of which we have just quoted the opening sentence.

John Cotton was born in the town of Derby on the 4th of December 1585. His father was Mr Roland Cotton, a lawyer, whose practice is stated to have been to urge his clients to endeavour to effect reconciliation or compromise, rather than have recourse to litigation. Both he and his wife were notably pious. Their son John shewed such precocity as a boy, that at the age of thirteen he was admitted into Trinity College, Cambridge. Circumstances having prevented his obtaining a fellowship in Trinity, he was transferred to Emmanuel College, and in that college was successively fellow, tutor, head-lecturer, dean, and catechist. Here he became famous for learning and eloquence; but for a time these were unsanctified. The account of the change that passed upon his soul we give at length in the words of his grandson.

‘Hitherto we have seen the life of Mr John Cotton, while he was not yet alive. Though the restraining and preventing grace of God had kept him from such outbreakings of sin as defile the lives of most in the world, yet like the old man, who for such a cause ordered this epitaph to be written on his grave, Here lies an old man, who lived but seven years; he reckoned himself to have been but a dead man, as being alienated from the life of God, until he had experienced that regeneration in his own soul, which was thus accomplished. The Holy Spirit of God had been at work upon his young heart, by the ministry of that reverend and renowned preacher of righteousness, Mr Perkins; but he resisted and smothered those convictions, through a vain persuasion, that if he being a godly man, it would spoil him for being a learned one. Yea, such was the secret enmity and prejudice of an unregenerate soul against real holiness, and such the torment which our Lord’s witnesses give to the consciences of the earthly-minded, that when he heard the bell toll for the funeral of Mr Perkins, his mind secretly rejoiced in his deliverance from that powerful ministry, by which his conscience had been so often beleaguered; the remembrance of which thing afterwards did break his heart exceedingly. But he was at length more effectually awakened, by a sermon of Dr Sibbs, wherein was discoursed the misery of those who had only a negative righteousness, or a civil, sober, honest blamelessness before men. Mr Cotton became now very sensible of his own miserable condition before God; and the arrows of these convictions did stick so fast upon him, that after no less than three years disconsolate apprehensions under them, the grace of God made him a thoroughly renewed

Christian, and filled him with a sacred joy, which accompanied him unto the fulness of joy for ever. For this cause, as persons truly converted unto God have a mighty and lasting affection for the instruments of their conversion; thus Mr Cotton's veneration for Dr Sibbs was after this very particular, and perpetual; and it caused him to have the picture of that great man in that part of his house where he might oftenest look upon it. But so the yoke of sore temptations and afflictions, and long spiritual trials, fitted him to be an eminently useful servant of God in his generation.'

It is worthy of very special note that the first sermon that he preached after his conversion was the means of the conversion of Dr Preston, who in his turn became one of the great lights of the university, and contributed more perhaps than any one else to the revival of vital religion, and the study of theology, which made the seventeenth century so notable an era in the history of religion and the Church in England.

Shortly after, Mr Cotton was elected minister of Boston, and despite of difficulties thrown in his way by a 'corrupt' mayor and an anti-puritan bishop, he was quietly settled in that town. Shortly after this he took the degree of Batchelor of Divinity, and on the recommendation of 'holy Mr Baynes,' he married Elizabeth Horrocks, who was a very great help unto him in the service of God.

For twenty years Mr Cotton lived in Boston, and laboriously and faithfully discharged the duties of an evangelist and a pastor; and with such a blessing that there was a great reformation in the town, 'profaneness was extinguished, superstition was abandoned, religion was embraced and practised among the body of the people; yea, the mayor, with most of the magistrates, were now called puritans, and the 'Satanical party' was become insignificant.

During a great portion of the time that he spent in Boston, he was amongst those who scrupled at the 'vestments' and the 'ceremonies,' and absolutely declined their use. For this he was for a short time silenced, but the storm blew over; and probably on account of the high esteem in which he was held by all classes in the place, he was long left unmolested. It seems to have been not without reason that the Bostonians esteemed him, for his renown as a preacher and a pastor contributed even to the worldly prosperity of the town. 'The inhabitants of Boston observed that God blessed them in their secular concerns remarkably the more through his dwelling among them; for many strangers, and some, too, that were gentlemen of good quality, resorted unto Boston, and some removed their habitations thither on his account; whereby the prosperity of the place was very much promoted.'

His indefatigable labours in the Lincolnshire fens at last began to tell on his health. A tertian ague lay upon him for a whole year. This led to his leaving Boston for a change of air. He recovered, but his wife died. Shortly after, 'Mrs Sarah Story, a virtuous widow, very dear to his former wife, became his consort, and by her he had both sons and daughters.'

It would seem to have been while he was still absent from Boston that he was accused to the High Commission Court. Powerful intercession was made on his behalf by the Earl of Dorset, but to no purpose. That nobleman intimated to him that 'if he had been guilty of drunkenness, or uncleanness, or any such lesser fault, he could have obtained his pardon; but inasmuch as he had been guilty of nonconformity and puritanism, the crime was unpardonable; and therefore, said he, you must fly for your safety.' This advice, after much prayerful consideration and consultation with friends, he

resolved to follow. Accordingly he was proceeding in disguise to a seaport, with the view of proceeding to Holland; but, meeting a friend, he was advised to go to London, and there, in conference with many pious ministers, the resolution was formed that he should rather go to New England. The paragraph containing the account of his voyage we must give without abridgment:

‘The God that had carried him through the fire of persecution, was now graciously with him in his passage through the water of the Atlantic Ocean, and he enjoyed a comfortable voyage over the great and wide sea. There were then three eminent ministers of God in the ship, namely, Mr Cotton, Mr Hooker, and Mr Stone, which glorious triumvirate coming together, made the poor people in the wilderness, at their coming, to say, That the God of heaven had supplied them with what would in some sort answer their three great necessities: Cotton for their clothing, Hooker for their fishing, and Stone for their building. But by one or other of these three divines in the ship, there was a sermon preached every day, all the while they were aboard, yea, they had three sermons or expositions, for the most part every day: of Mr Cotton in the morning, Mr Hooker in the afternoon, Mr Stone after supper, in the evening. And after they had been a month upon the seas, Mr Cotton received a mercy, which God had now for twenty years denied unto him, in the birth of his eldest son, whom he called Seaborn, in the remembrance of the never-to-be-forgotten blessings which he thus enjoyed upon the seas. But at the end of seven weeks they arrived at New England, September 3, in the year 1633, where he put ashore at New Boston, which in a few years, by the smile of God, especially upon the holy wisdom, conduct, and credit of our Mr Cotton, upon some accounts of growth, came to exceed Old Boston in everything that renders a town considerable. And it is remarkable, that his arrival at New England was just after the people there had been by solemn fasting and prayer seeking unto God, that inasmuch as they had been engaging to walk with him in his ordinances according to his word, he would mercifully send over to them such as might be eyes unto them in the wilderness, and strengthen them in discerning and following of that word.’

Dr Cotton’s share in the legislation of the colony is matter of history. He probably overstrained the application of the Jewish law; but undoubtedly for a time virtue abounded and good order reigned, and the blessing of God rested upon the colony. For a time, too, the churches flourished, and there were daily added unto the church such as should be saved. But tares were sown amongst the wheat. An antinomian party sprang up; and Dr Cotton, through the greatness of his charity thinking no evil, was supposed to favour them, and had no little difficulty in vindicating himself from the foul reproach. It seems perfectly clear that there was no foundation for it; but it was propagated in various books and pamphlets, and the echo of it may be occasionally heard till this day.

In 1641, Cotton received an invitation from many distinguished men to return to England. It was even contemplated to send over a ship on purpose to bring him back: but the design was abandoned; and as he had spent twenty years in the old English Boston, so he spent twenty in the New England Boston.

At length he caught a cold, which became inflammation of the lungs and asthma, and he had a presentiment that his course was done. He feared not death, for the rod and the staff of the Lord the Shepherd comforted him.

‘While he thus lay sick, the magistrates, the ministers of the country, and Christians of all sorts resorted unto him, as unto a public father, full of sad apprehensions at the withdrawal of such a public blessing; and the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, while he had strength to utter the profitable conceptions of his mind, caused them to reckon these their visits the gainfullest that ever they had made. Among others, the then President of the College, with many tears, desired of Mr Cotton, before his de-

parture, to bestow his blessing on him, saying, I know in my heart they whom you bless shall be blessed. And not long before his death, he sent for the elders of the church, whereof he himself was also an elder ; who having, according to the apostolical direction, prayed over him, he exhorted them to feed the flock over which they were overseers, and increase their watch against those declensions which he saw the professors of religion falling into ; adding, I have now, through grace, been more than forty years a servant unto the Lord Jesus Christ, and have ever found him a good master. When his colleague, Mr Wilson, took his leave of him with a wish that God would lift up the light of his countenance upon him, he instantly replied, God hath done it already, brother. He then called for his children, with whom he left the gracious covenant of God, as their never-failing portion ; and now desired that he might be left private the rest of his minutes, for the more freedom of his applications unto the Lord. So lying speechless a few hours, he breathed his blessed soul into the hands of his heavenly Lord, on the twenty-third of December 1652, entering on the sixty-eighth year of his own age ; and on the day, yea, at the hour of his constant weekly labours in the lecture, wherein he had been so long serviceable, even to all the churches of New England. Upon Tuesday the twenty-eighth of December he was most honourably interred, with a most numerous concourse of people, and the most grievous and solemn funeral that was ever known perhaps upon the American strand ; and the lectures in his church the whole winter following, performed by the neighbouring ministers, were but so many funeral sermons upon the death and worth of this extraordinary person, among which the first, I think, was preached by Mr Richard Mather, who gave unto the bereaved church of Boston this great character of their incomparable Cotton. Let us pray that God would raise up some Eleazar to succeed this Aaron ; but you can hardly expect that so large a portion of the Spirit of God should dwell in any one, as dwelt in this blessed man ! And generally in the other churches through the country, the expiration of this general blessing to them all did produce funeral sermons full of honour and sorrow ; even as many miles above an hundred as Newhaven was distant from the Massachusetts Bay, when the tidings of Mr Cotton's decease arrived there, Mr Davenport with many tears bewailed it, in a public discourse on that in 2 Sam. i. 26, " I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been unto me." Yea, they speak of Mr Cotton in their lamentations to this day.'

In a time when there were giants upon the earth, the mental and spiritual stature of John Cotton was notable. His piety, his learning, his ministerial laboriousness, were all gigantic. Two centuries and a half have not obscured his fame : by his published writings he still speaketh ; and his name is held in veneration in that city and state whose character he so materially contributed to mould, and to which he gave a distinctness which all the attritions of a quarter of a millennium have not obliterated.

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL

MR GEORGE CABORN, MAYOR;

WITH THE ALDERMEN, COMMON COUNCIL, MINISTERS, AND THE REST OF MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,
OF BOSTON IN LINCOLNSHIRE.

DEARLY BELOVED,—The large interest which I have long enjoyed in your favour, and which you must ever have in my heart, hath emboldened me to prefix your names to this piece; and with the more confidence of your acceptance, because in it an address is made to you at once by two, who sometimes were together your ministers in the gospel of Christ: by the ever-to-be-honoured Mr Cotton in the book, and by my unworthy self in the review and dedication of it: both now removed from you. The one, first to a remote part of the world, there to plant churches, and thence (after that happy work done) to heaven; the other, to some more public service nearer hand, in which I humbly crave the best help of your prayers, as you are constantly remembered in mine; and that with more strength of affection, whilst I oft call to mind those most comfortable days, in which I enjoyed the happiness of joint-ministry with so able and faithful a guide, and both of us so much satisfaction and encouragement from a people so united in the love both of the truth and of one another. I cannot read what Paul writeth of his Thessalonians, (the first chapters of both his epistles to them,) but I think I read over what we then found in Boston. They were then very happy days with you, when your faith did grow exceedingly, and your love to Christ's ordinances, ministers, servants, and to one another abounded. Although your town be situate in a low country, yet

God then raised your esteem very high, and your eminency in piety overtopped the height of your steeple; your 'name was as an ointment poured out,' Cant. i. 3; and your 'renown went forth, for that beauty and comeliness which God had put upon you,' Ezek. xvi. 14. How it is now with you, at this distance I cannot so well judge; only I desire you would please seriously to consider whether the new wine or the old be better, and ever think that best which doth not intoxicate us into staggering from the truth, and falling off from one another; but so cheereth the heart, as yet maketh us humble and meek, and keepeth us close to God, his truth, ordinances, the power of his grace, and all those duties in which the faithful among you formerly walked with God, met with peace, and at last reached heaven. Such a frame of spirit and way, I can remember, was sometimes among you; and as oft as I remember it, I desire not to forget to praise God for it. 'What was then your blessedness?' Gal. iv. 15. And what then was, I humbly beseech God may so revive and continue, that you may prove a little model and foretaste of that blessed church, which God will 'make an eternal excellency, and a joy of many generations,' Isa. lx. 15. This you and I have the more cause to desire and endeavour, because,

1. *Miserum est fuisse*, it is a great misery to have it said of us, that we have been happy. *Fuimus*

Trocs, fait Illum, was but a sad word; and it is a sadder thing for the Sun of righteousness, which had sometimes shone gloriously upon any particular church or people, at last to set in a cloud. If such a light come to be darkened, 'how great is that darkness!' After the light is put out, the room proveth darker than if it had never been set up; and the remembrance of those former pleasant things, once enjoyed, but afterwards lost, added to, and aggravated the church's lamentation, Lam. i. 7.

2. And yet such a lamentable condition hath been and may be the lot of such places and people, which God sometimes hath highly honoured, when they have grown fat and wanton together. Bethel hath proved Beth-aven, Hos. x. 5; in after times we find young profane mockers in Bethel, 2 Kings ii.; and scornful neuters in Peniel, Judges viii. 8. Go to Shiloh, Jer. vii. 12; think of the sometimes glorious churches of Asia. As empires and kingdoms, so particular churches have had their periods. I have sometimes on purpose visited some places where God had before planted his church and a faithful ministry, to see if I could discern any footsteps and remembrances of such a mercy; and 'lo, they were all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof is broken down,' Prov. xxiv. 31.

3. And which is more sad, in some of them never, in others very hardly built up again; God proving severe when we grow wanton. And so, as he removeth the candlestick, Rev. ii. 5, when we play or fight by the light of the candle set up in it, so he is very hardly induced to light it again in that place where it hath once been wantonly or frowardly put out. There are more hopes of recovering a particular person fallen, by virtue of an everlasting covenant made with him, although he may go halting to his grave, and never here again rise up to his former comforts and enlargements; but a particular church or people (unless it be that of the Jews, who in the great jubilee after their rejection shall again return to their former possessions, Jer. iii. 1, 12-14, and viii. 4) cannot claim the like privilege of such a covenant. The ark never returned to the same place from whence it was in a way of judgment removed; and the glory of the Lord, when, after its gradual removal, was at last quite gone from the first temple,

was not fully restored in the second, till Christ's first coming; nor will it be in this their rejection, till his second. I think there will be found very few instances of God's presence and ordinances, long enjoyed by a people, and after abused and rejected, if thereupon lost, easily, if at all, restored. The 'faith once delivered to the saints,' Jude 3, is not wont to be received or lost the second time. The reason is, because a jealous God can least endure, upon trial made of him, to be slighted in that wherein he would most commend to us his special love, and ever accounts the rejecting of such special tokens of it as a renouncing of himself: 'They have not rejected thee, but me,' 1 Sam. viii. 7. And as the husband in the law pleaded some uncleanness in his wife, when he put her away, Deut. xxiv. 1, so God makes account that we tell the world, that we have found iniquity in him, when we go far from him, and walk after vanity, and that he hath been a wilderness and land of darkness, when we prove lords, and will come no more at him, Jer. ii. 5, 31. Dear friends, he hath not been so to you, even your enemies being judges; and your own experience will bear witness for him, that his gospel, even in point of outward advantage, hath paid for its entertainment. These thick cords of love therefore, I hope, will bind you close to him, and strongly draw you off from whatever may be a means of drawing you away from him; and so, by your continuing to be planted in the house of the Lord, and by your still flourishing in the courts of our God, you will proclaim to all that he is upright, and that there is no unrighteousness in him, Ps. xcii. 13-15. These, dearly beloved, are my affectionate desires and hopes of you; and yet, in regard of the unsettledness of these times, and the wildness of many men's spirits in them, you will pardon me if I be 'jealous over you with a godly jealousy;' and that having this fit opportunity, I take the boldness, by 'putting you in remembrance' of what sometimes you were, 2 Pet. i. 13, to stir you up to keep warm your first love, Rev. ii. 4, 5, and to do your first works; to be watchful, and to strengthen the things that remain, especially if any be ready to die, Rev. iii. 2; to hold fast the form of sound words, 2 Tim. i. 13, whereto you have been formerly delivered, Rom. vi. 17, and to hold up the power of godliness;—

In yourselves, by the constant exercise of faith, repentance, self-examination and humiliation, self-denial and mortification, &c.

In your public government, by reviving your ancient care and zeal for the sanctifying of God's Sabbaths, countenancing his ministers and ordinances, and discountenancing whatever doctrines or practices are contrary to the truth as it is in Jesus, and the power of godliness.

In your families, by private prayer, singing of psalms, catechising your children and servants, training them up in God's fear, and restraining them from that pride, wantonness, and stubbornness which your faithful pastor (now with God) was wont much to complain of, and which in these looser times I wish you had not cause much more now to bewail.

Now the good Lord help you to stand up for God in your several places, and so serve your generation, Acts xiii. 36; that peace and truth may be in your days, 2 Kings xx. 19; that in them your sun may not go down, but when you are gathered to your fathers, in your hopeful and happy posterity it may rise with greater strength and glory, as drawing nearer to a more glorious day now approaching; that then another generation may not arise after

you, which shall not know the God of their fathers, Judges ii. 30, and so the ages to come may be to seek for *Somnium in Somnio*, old Boston in new. But on the contrary,

That your seed may be so known among the Gentiles, and your offspring among the people, that all that see them may acknowledge them to be the seed which the Lord hath blessed, Isa. lxi. 9.

That this may be the everlasting covenant which God shall make with you and them, that his Spirit and word shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, nor out of the mouth of your seed's seed, from henceforth and for ever, Isa. lix. 21.

But that your congregation may be a Zion, which God hath chosen, and desired for his habitation; of which he may say, This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it,—is, and, God enabling me, shall be, the most hearty desire and prayer of him

Who desireth to have no dominion over your faith,

But to be a helper of your joy,

ANTHONY TUCKNEY.

*From St John's College in Cambridge,
July 7, 1654.*

A BRIEF EXPOSITION UPON ECCLESIASTES.

THIS whole book is a discourse not unseasonable for this country, wherein men, that have left all to enjoy the gospel, now, as if they had forgotten the end for which they came hither, are ready to leave the gospel for outward things; which are here lively and clearly demonstrated to be vanity, yea, vanity of vanities.

Obj. But were not something of Christ more proper for a minister of the gospel to handle?

Ans. The way to stir us up to seek after Christ, is to behold and be convinced of the vanity of all things here below.

When Eve brought forth *Cain*, she hoped she had got the promised seed, Gen. iv. 1, with iii. 15.

But when she saw, by his spirit and carriage, that she was deceived in him, she called her next son *Abel*, Gen. iv. 2, which signifieth *vanity*.

And so she must see all things to be, before she bring forth *Seth*, the father of the promised seed. Now *Abel*, or vanity, expresseth the state of all the creatures by the fall; and Solomon taketh up *Eve's* word, and amplifieth it, 'vanity, yea, vanity of vanities.' So this whole book is a commentary upon the state of corruption, Rom. viii. 20. A fit introduction to Christ in the Canticles.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1. *The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.*

Ver. 2. *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*

The chief good of the sons of men, which the moral philosophers among the heathen sought after but found not, Solomon in this book truly and fully openeth to us. The philosophers being vain and wicked themselves, how could they find or teach the true chief good? But this wise and good king, upon his own experience, both found it himself, and taught us to find it after him.

The sum of his discourse standeth upon these two points: 1. That the chief good of the sons of men is not to be found in all the creatures under the sun, nor in men's labours and ways about them; for they are all vanity and vexation of spirit. 2. That it is to be found in the fear of God and keeping his commandments, chap. xii. 13.

These two verses contain, first, The title of the book; wherein the book is set forth, 1. By the author; 2. And he by (1.) His condition, *Cokeleth*. (2.) His lineage, *the son of David*. (3.) By his office, *a king*. (4.) The place of his government, in *Jerusalem*, ver. 1.

Secondly, The argument, or sum of his discourse, or at least of the former part of it, ver. 2. Wherein is set forth, 1. The condition of all things, by the adjunct of *vanity*, 'All is vanity.' And this vanity is amplified by many ornaments of rhetoric:—

1. A *hyperbole*, *vanity* itself for vain.

2. *Polyptoton*, *vanity of vanities*.

3. *Epizeuxis*, (the like sound continued in the same sentence.) *vanity of vanities*.

4. *Anadiplosis*, (the same sound repeated in the end of one sentence, and the beginning of the other.) *vanity of vanities, vanity, &c.*

5. *Epanalepsis*, (the same sound repeated in the beginning of the sentence, and in the end,) *vanity, &c., all is vanity.*

6. *Anaphora*, (the same sound repeated in the beginning of the sentences,) *vanity, &c., vanity, &c.*

7. *Epistrophe*, (the same sound repeated in the end of the sentences,) *of vanities, &c., of vanities.*

8. *Epanodos*, (the same sound repeated in the beginning and midst, in the midst and end,) *vanity, vanity, vanity.*

9. *Numerus oratorius*, (the same number of syllables repeated in both sentences,) *vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities.*

10. *Climax*, (the same sound continued and increased by degrees,) *vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, &c.*

11. *Paranomasia*, (the repeating of like sounds, yet somewhat differing.)

2. This confirmed by the testimony of *Cohoeleth*, 'saith the Preacher,' ver. 2.

Ver. 1. *The words of Cohoeleth.* Solomon had four names—Solomon, Jedidiah, Lemuel, Cohoeleth, 2 Sam. xii. 24, 25; Prov. xxxi. 1, 4, and the text. This name, *Cohoeleth*, is only given him in this book, when, after long experience of all earthly vanities, he in his old age speaketh to wean his people from them, and teacheth them the fear of the Lord for their chief good.

It is a participle of a verb out of use in the active voice, yet in the passive used to signify, *to be gathered, or assembled*; whence קהל, a congregation; קהלת, then, being a noun or participle of the feminine gender, may imply to us these three things:

First, Solomon's gathering himself to the church and assembling therewith, when yet his wives, and many other idolaters with them, assembled to the conventicles and synagogues of false gods.

Secondly, That in this true church assembled he was *anima concionans, in hæc verba*; he spake these words, or delivered them in the congregation, by word or writing, as a testimony of his repentance; which may also further appear if we consider,

1. What he saith by his experience of the dangerousness of enticing women, even his own, and of his deliverance out of their hands, as being beloved of God, Eccles. vii. 26–28.

2. The frame of the whole book, which speaketh sadly of the bitterness of all earthly vanities after his long experience of all of them in his old age.

Thirdly, That he delivered these things from his heart and soul, not out of any policy of state, to satisfy the people, Ps. lxxviii. 11; Isa. xl. 9.

So the feminine gender is expounded, Ps. xvi. 2.

Use 1. To persuade us of Solomon's repentance after his fall. Such as think he fell finally and totally are not only hereby refuted, but by all those arguments which prove the perseverance of the saints, which are many and impregnable; and besides, by such other arguments as more peculiarly concern Solomon himself; as,

1. Our Saviour's testimony that all the prophets are in heaven, Luke xiii. 28.

Now Solomon was a prophet, seeing the whole Scripture was penned by no other but prophets and apostles, 2 Pet. i. 19–21; Eph. ii. 20.

Balaam, though he prophesied, as did also Saul, yet neither of them were prophets—a spirit of prophecy rested not upon them, Joshua xiii. 22.

2. He is said to be loved of God, and therefore by God's own appointment to be named Jedidiah, 2 Sam. xii. 25.

Now God's love is the pledge, as of Jacob's election, Rom. ix. 13, so of Solomon's. God is not wont to give names to things but according as he findeth them, or purposeth to make them: 'Whom he loveth, he loveth to the end,' John xiii. 1. To say that was only meant in regard of not taking the kingdom from him and his posterity, as he did from Saul, is to wrest the text, which promiseth,

1. That he will be a father to him.

2. For his person, that he will not take his mercy from him.

3. For his kingdom, that it shall not be taken away.

Use 2. To teach us to accept this book with greater respect. The sun never shineth more gloriously than when it breaketh forth out of some dark cloud, nor the graces of God's Spirit than when they have overwrestled some cloud of temptations and sins, and break forth into repentance. So was it with David also in Ps. li.

The son of David; which he mentioneth in sundry respects.

First, It is honourable to be the son of a prince. Eccles. x. 17.

Secondly, It procureth the more reverence to a prophet to be the son of a prophet.

Thirdly, It is comfortable to be the son of a man after God's own heart, for the covenant's sake, Gen. xvii. 7; and especially of David, for the promise sake made to him and to his seed after him, 2 Sam. vii. 12-16.

Use 1. To procure reverent acceptance of the doctrine of this book for the penman's sake; for though it little skilleth what the pen be, of a goose or swan's quill, or raven's, yet when God delighteth to use such an instrument, so richly adorned with many privileges, it challengeth from us the more due respect. It is a book written by the eldest son of wisdom.

Use 2. To teach parents that send their children to the university, to seek to excel in eminency of grace, and love amongst men. It will add some lustre and credit to their children's ministry, as Zacharias and Elisabeth's godliness, Luke i. 6, did to John Baptist's, and David's to Solomon's.

King in Jerusalem. King, as having sovereign power of life and death; to whom it belonged to be as a head to counsel, and direct, and rule the people; to be also as a shepherd to feed the people with wholesome laws and institutions, and examples of good life, and to drive them from feeding in unwholesome pastures, upon unsavoury vanities.

In Jerusalem. The city of God, the mother church of Israel, then a faithful city, full of faithful and good people, though afterwards a harlot.

He doth not say, 'king of Israel,' as Prov. i. 1, but 'in Jerusalem,' intimating that his conversing in this faithful city, amongst so many good people, was some means the sooner to bring him to a sight of his sin, and to inditing and penning these words, which shew his repentance.

It could not be but that Solomon must needs read in the countenances of his people, when he came abroad to church and judgment-seat, and hear likewise by intelligence of his wise counsellors, how much the citizens of Jerusalem were grieved with his building idolatrous temples, and tolerating false worship in them; the which might well provoke him to a more serious sight of his sin, and to make mention of the city in the words that shew his repent-

ance. Besides, in a penitential discourse, the full latitude of titles is unseasonable.

Use 1. To shew us that God useth instruments of all sorts in penning the Scriptures, as well some kings, as David and Solomon; as some fishermen, as amongst the apostles; and herdsman, as Amos; and priests, as Jeremiah; that all sorts might meet with style and phrase of speech meet for them.

Use 2. That it is no disgrace to any man, or to any man's children, to be preachers. Solomon and David, both kings and both prophets; yea, Solomon studying to teach the people knowledge, Eccles. xii. 9, 10. The angels, higher than the highest men, are 'all ministering spirits,' &c., Heb. i. 14.

Use 3. It is no unbecoming office for kings to write good books, or to publish their repentance after their public sins, Ps. li.

Use 4. To let us see what a benefit it is for a minister or magistrate to live amongst good people. They naturally help one another to avoid sin, and to come out of it.

Use 5. To add still the more due respect to this book, penned by a king, and a king of the church of God.

Use 6. To teach penitents, not to affect the expression of titles or styles of honour at large.

Ver. 2. *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*

Vanity of vanities, &c. The logical and rhetorical resolution of these words is delivered above in opening the first verse.

Doct. 1. All things under the sun, whether creatures of God or labours of men, are altogether vain to the attaining of true happiness; or thus, are excessively, diversely, wonderfully vain. The chief things which men seek for in this life are vain in a threefold respect:

1. To find the chief good in them.
2. To satisfy the soul, Isa. lv. 2.
3. To make that good they are made for of themselves, Ps. xxxiii. 17.

For the gathering of this point from the true meaning of the text, compare this place with ver. 3, 14, and chap. ii. 3. In this sense Paul calleth all things loss, (dross, dung,) Phil. iii. 7, 8, to wit, not only without Christ, or in comparison of him, but for the attainment of Christ or true happiness.

The ground of this point may be most fitly shewed in opening the several acceptions of *vanity* in the Scripture, and observing how they all agree in all things in the world in this respect. Vanity is put for,

1. Unprofitableness, as here, ver. 2, 3; Mal. iii. 14; which agreeth to worldly things. Mat. xvi. 26, a man may have the whole world, and lose his soul; and then what profit did they yield him? Prov. xi. 4.

2. Emptiness, Ps. ii. 1; 1 Cor. iii. 20. Vain, that is, void of substance and worth and sufficiency. So Isa. xxxvi. 5, to which also agreeth Isa. xxix. 8, and lv. 2.

3. Lightness, Ps. lxii. 9; which is also true, Deut. xxxii. 47. The like may be said of all earthly things in this case.

4. Falsehood and lying, Ps. xii. 2, and iv. 2; which also holdeth here, Ps. xxxi. 6; Jonah ii. 8.

5. Frustration or disappointment of the end, Ps. cxxvii. 1, 2. Unless the Lord build and keep the house and city, the builder's and watchman's care will fall short of the end they aim at, and so the work is in vain, James i. 26; 1 Cor. xv. 14.

6. Frailty or inconstancy, vanishing away as smoke, Rom. iii. 20, 21; Ps. cxliv. 4; Isa. xl. 6-8.

7. Iniquity, 2 Chron. xiii. 7; Prov. xii. 11.

8. Folly, Job xi. 12; Prov. xii. 11.

Reasons of the vanity to those former ends:

1. From the end for which God made them—to wit, for us, not us for them, 1 Cor. iii. 22.

2. From their condition; they are corporal, temporal, and therefore cannot feed, much less satisfy an eternal spirit, Luke xii. 19, 20.

3. From the curse lying upon them since the fall, Gen. iii. 17.

Reasons of the repetition of this vanity, and the Holy Ghost's manner of speech in expressing this vanity:

1. To shew the excessiveness of the vanity of these earthly things.

Vanity implieth they are not only vain, but exceedingly vain; as vain as vanity itself.

Vanity of vanities is in the Hebrew a superlative form of speech, to set forth the highest vanity; as the song of songs, the most excellent song; the king of kings, the servant of servants, the chiefest king, the most servile servant.

2. To shew the multitude and variety of vanities heaped up in earthly things. There is a nest, as it were, of vanity in them; or, as Samson speaks in another case, Judges xv. 16, 'I eaps upon heaps.'

3. For admiration. To shew the wonderful and strange vanity of these things, he breaketh forth into this exclamation, 'O vanity of vanities,' &c.

Use 1. To shew us what a great change sin maketh in the world: it doth, as it were, blast the virtue and beauty of the creature.

Time was, before sin entered, when God saw all the creatures to be very good, Gen. i. 31. Now, after sin had blown upon them, he looked upon them again, and all is vanity. Such a change will sin make in us, and in our counsels and courses.

Use 2. To shew us what a woeful change they make that sell their souls to commit sin for any earthly benefits, which are but vanity, Jonah ii. 8; Isa. v. 18. Temptations from earthly things may draw on sin like cart ropes, but they are the cart ropes of vanity. And so do they that change the ordinances of God for accommodations which are under the sun.

Use 3. To shew us the vanity of men beyond all creatures, Ps. cxix. 89. He for whose sake all the rest became vain, is much more vain himself, Ps. lxii. He is lighter than vanity, Isa. xl. 17.

Use 4. To teach us not to set our hearts on earthly things, Ps. lxii. 10, neither by,

1. Coveting them before we have them, Prov. xxiii. 4, 5.

2. Confidently trusting in them, or proudly rejoicing in them, when we have them, Job xxxi. 24, 25.

3. Grieving when we part from them, Job i. 21.

Use 5. To exhort us to lay up better treasure than these earthly vanities, Mat. vi. 19, 20.

Use 6. For a sign of trial of our repentance. Such as see nothing but glory and goodness in these outward things, Satan hath bewitched them, Mat. iv. 8. But such as see the extreme vanity of them have repented with Solomon here.

Use 7. To teach us it is no vanity to teach the vanity of the creatures in rhetorical elegancies. Here are many tropes of rhetoric used, so Rom. xii. 5, with these cautions:

1. That the rhetoric be suitable to the matter, grave and holy; else it is bastard rhetoric.

2. That it set forward the end of the discourse, to wit, to affect the heart with the sense of the matter in hand.

Ver. 2. *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*

In that Solomon sets the seal of his testimony to the vanity of all these earthly things, after the long trial of them, observe this :

Doct. They that have had most trial of all earthly comforts are most ready and best able to avouch the vanity of them.

Who could haste more to outward things than Solomon, and yet be more confident in avouching the vanity of them ?

Reason 1. Experience is a divine testimony, as being taken from the work of God, in the event of things coming to pass by providence.

Reason 2. Experience is of great authority with men, as being an argument more sensible, and less subject to ignorance or error.

Use. To shew us a broad difference of earthly things from spiritual and heavenly. Earthly things seem goodly and glorious, till we have them and good trial of them, and afterwards we find them altogether vanity ; but heavenly things seem vanity till we have them, and good trial of them, then seem they excellent and divine : no gain, no glory, no comfort like to that which they yield.

Before we leave this verse, let us remove a false collection which one maketh from this word—that reading is preaching, because Solomon calleth his book (though read) the Preacher.

But for answer, consider, 1. Solomon doth not call his book, but himself, the Preacher.

2. He might from hence collect that the preacher may deliver his sermon by writing, and so that writing may be preaching ; but that reading therefore is preaching followeth not. For in writing, a minister may and doth make use of spiritual gifts requisite in a prophet or preacher, to the exercise of his ministry, 1 Cor. xiv. 1 ; but not so in reading, which even a school-boy may perform, that never attained any spiritual gift at all.

Ver. 3. *What profit hath a man of all the labour which he hath under the sun ?*

Labour under the sun is labour taken about the creatures or things under the sun ; for the labour a man taketh for the favour of God, the fellowship of the blood and Spirit of Christ, &c. is labour for things above the sun. Whence such are said to converse in heaven, Phil. iii. 20, and to walk with God, Gen. v. 24.

What profit. To wit, towards the attaining of true happiness ; otherwise, in all labour there is some profit towards the helping of our earthly estates, Prov. xiv. 23.

This verse is an *ἐπιλογὴ*, or dwelling upon the former conclusion, of the vanity of all things, delivered in the former verse, and here repeated in other words more plainly.

Doct. All the labour a man taketh, whether of mind or body, about the creatures under the sun, is altogether unprofitable towards the attainment of true happiness, chap. ii. 22, and iii. 9.

Reasons from the disproportion of these creatures to our happiness :—

Reason 1. All these creatures are under the sun, but our happiness is above it. Now, as water can never ascend higher, nor carry any other thing higher, than the fountain from whence it came, so neither can things below the sun carry us up to a condition above the sun.

2. These creatures are temporal, our happiness eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 18.

3. These things are changeable and unsettled, but our happiness unchangeable.

Use 1. To wean us from immoderate labour after these things which cannot profit. It many times falleth out that those things which we labour most to avoid are the most behoveful to attainment of happiness, as afflictions, Ps. cxix. 67, 71.

Use 2. To stir up to labour principally for heavenly blessings, things above the sun, Isa. lv. 1-3 ; 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Ver. 4. *One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh ; but the earth abideth for ever.*

Ver. 5. *The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteneth to the place where he arose.*

That which Solomon taught us in the former verse, the unprofitableness of all labour about worldly things towards the attainment of happiness, he con-

firmeth in the rest of this chapter, and the rest which follow, by induction of sundry sorts of labours, wherein men usually weary themselves, but in vain. And first he beginneth with the vanity of the labour of the mind about the study of natural things, which in this whole chapter he sheweth to be unprofitable to the attainment of happiness, by two reasons.

1. The first taken from the want of such things as accompany true happiness—to wit, stability, satiety, newness, in natural things. The reason standeth thus:

The knowledge and study of such things as want stability, satiety, newness, is unprofitable to the attainment of true happiness; but the knowledge and study of such things, is of such things as want stability, satiety, novelty.

This want of stability he proves by the state,

1. Of bodies mixed of the four elements, which are generable and corruptible, come and go, ver. 4.

2. Of the four elements.

(1.) Of the sun, the chariot of fire, ver. 5.

(2.) Of the wind or air, ver. 6.

(3.) Of the water, ver. 7.

(4.) Only the earth standeth still in the midst of all these restless motions.

[1.] Partly as a centre about which these move.

[2.] Partly as a theatre upon which every generation cometh and goes, ver. 4.

Whence, though it be stable, yet we want stability in it, which is all one to us as if it were not stable.

Their want of satiety he sheweth, ver. 8.

Their want of novelty, ver. 9–11.

2. The second reason is taken from his own experience, ver. 12, to the end of the chapter.

Doct. 1. Such things as come by generation stand not at a stay, but pass away, (pass away by corruption,) Job xiv. 1; Ps. xlix. 7–9; Joshua xxiii. 14; 1 Kings ii. 2.

Reason 1. From the causes in nature whereof they are generated, which are the four elements, and they contrary one to another. Now, contrary things, being divided one against another, make the whole body of short continuance, one wasting another till all fail, Mat. xii. 25. Heat against cold, and moisture against dryness, work continually one against another, till all be consumed.

Besides, in living creatures the disproportion between *Calor naturalis* and *Humidum radicale*, causeth

dissolution; the food received breedeth not such kindly heat and moisture as is daily spent, but a more mild heat and more raw moisture.

Obj. How, then, could Adam's life be maintained for ever, if he had stood in innocence?

Ans. By the almighty power of God subduing and keeping these contrary qualities in a sweet temper and harmony, even by the same hand whereby he kept the wild beasts from preying upon the tame, allowing them to eat nothing but grass, Gen. i. 30.

Reason 2. From the curse which sin brought with it, even the bondage of corruption upon the creature, Rom. vi. 23, and viii. 20, 21. It is commonly said of the oak that it liveth three hundred years—growing one hundred, standing at a stay another hundred, and decaying the next hundred. The Holy Ghost recordeth of the patriarchs that they lived many hundreds, Gen. v.

Pliny out of Hesiod describeth nine ages to the crow, sometimes as much more to the hart, and yet three times as much more to the raven, *Nat. Hist.*, lib. vii. c. 48.

But yet all these, being compounded and generated of the four elements, do in the end return into them again by dissolution and corruption.

Use 1. To teach us (that which is Solomon's scope) that the study of these natural things is not available to the attainment of true happiness; for how should that which is restless (and, as Solomon's word is, full of labour) procure us settled rest and tranquillity, which accompanieth true happiness? The mind of man, as philosophers have observed, is somewhat assimilated into the nature of the object which it studieth and is conversant about: as mariners, who are conversant about winds, and seas, and storms, are more boisterous; shepherds and herdsmen more brutish; foresters more wild; butchers more bloody, &c. So the study of these restless creatures leaveth the mind more restless.

In particular, the study and knowledge of the passing away of one generation after another sheweth us our mortality and misery, and thereby yieldeth us grief and vexation, but no relief if we rest there.

Use 2. To exhort us to lift up our hearts to true wisdom, by the consideration of this unsettledness of our estates, Ps. xc. 10, 12; Deut. xxxii. 29.

Prepare for a change; it is a-coming, Heb. xiii. 14; Micah ii. 10.

Use 3. To exhort to weanedness in our present condition, and contentment in all estates, 1 Cor. vii. 29-31.

Use 4. To exhort to fruitfulness in good things whilst we here abide, 2 Pet. i. 13-15.

Doct. 2. As one generation passeth away, so another cometh.

The sun setteth, and ariseth the same again; trees may be cut down, and yet spring again; not so we, but others come in our place, Job xiv. 7-10.

Reason 1. God will always have his church to call upon him in this world whilst the world standeth.

Reason 2. God will have the elder generations to instruct and govern the younger, and the younger to yield reverence and obedience to the elder, which cannot be unless one generation be coming on as another passeth away.

Use 1. To refute the Pythagorean dotage of returning of the same persons again many years after their death.

Use 2. To stir up the generations passing away to be helpful to the generation coming on, in good counsels, instructions, examples, &c., Ps. lxxi. 18, and lxxviii. 3, 4; Isa. xxxviii. 13, 19.

Use 3. To teach the younger sort, as they come after, so to make some benefit of their ancestors' going before, observing whatsoever was commendable in them and imitating it; and eschewing whatsoever was evil and dangerous, Zech. i. 5, 6.

Doct. 3. Though one generation passeth away, and another cometh on, yet the earth abideth for ever.

As one harvest is gathered another cometh, yet the earth or soil still remaineth, standeth.

Reason 1. God's word establishing it, and that even upon nothing, Ps. xxxiii. 9; Job xxvi. 7.

Use 1. Against Copernicus's opinion of the revolution of the earth, and the standing still of the sun, Ps. xix. 5, and cxix. 90. If the earth moved swiftly, when a man throweth a stone the same way the earth moveth he might easily overtake the stone before it fell; or, it may be, standing still, the earth speedily moving would carry him so far as to be under the stone when it should fall.

Use 2. To moderate our desires after the earth and earthly things, which we must leave behind us,

and cannot carry away with us, 1 Tim. vi. 7, 8; Ps. xlix. 17.

Use 3. To reprove our unstaidness to stand in good ways, though the word of God have been as well spoken to us as to the earth, which yet standeth according to his word, Jer. v. 22, 23.

Use 4. To exhort to the building of our hopes of salvation upon God's word, which will establish them for ever when other grounds will fail us.

Ver. 5. *The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.*

Ver. 6. *The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.*

Ver. 7. *All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.*

Ver. 8. *All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.*

Ver. 9. *The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.*

Ver. 10. *Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.*

Ver. 11. *There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.*

Doct. 1. The knowledge of such things as are full of labour, and empty of yielding satisfaction to the mind, and of variety or newness, is unprofitable to the attainment of true happiness.

This is the ground upon which Solomon buildeth the unprofitableness of the labour of the mind about the knowledge of natural things.

1. They are full of labour or restless motion, ver. 8.

2. They yield no satisfying to the eye and ear, which are the senses of discipline.

(1.) The one by observation.

(2.) The other by instruction.

3. There is no newness or variety in them, which arguing would not hold unless this doctrine be pre-supposed as a ground.

Reason of it from the nature of such things wherein true blessedness standeth.

They are such as—

1. Are at rest; he maketh it our safety to rest in peace and tranquillity, Isa. xxx. 7, 15: the favour of God, the blood of Christ, the fellowship of God's Spirit, the word of promise, the covenant of grace and peace. But natural things, which are themselves in perpetual motion, they leave our minds restless.

2. Do satisfy the mind and heart of a Christian. His eye would ever see the favour of God and the light of his countenance shining upon him, his ear would ever hear the things belonging to his peace.

The eye or ear not to be satisfied with such or such things, implieth either,

1. That a man careth not to see or hear any more of them, as having enough of them, and yet would have something besides them, as being not contented with them. So it is meant here, Isa. lv. 1, 3.

But, on the contrary, in heavenly things, a man having true and full contentment in them yet desireth to partake more and more of them, John iv. 14; Mat. v. 6; Ps. xlii. 1, 2. For such things do yield true satisfaction to the eye and ear and taste, whereas a man is desirous always to see and hear and taste the same. And so is it in heavenly things—the more we taste of them, the more we desire them, and yet are fully satisfied and contented with them.

2. Secondly, That a man not having enough of that he seeth and heareth, would have more of it, and yet cannot attain it, and thereupon is vexed; as Aristotle, not fully comprehending the course of Euripus, is said to have cast himself into it: and so is it also meant here in sundry difficulties of natural things.

3. Thirdly, Are new, full of fresh and sweet variety of newness. To a new creature, behold all things become new, 2 Cor. v. 17—not only within him, new mind, new judgment, new conscience, new heart, new affections, (new joys, fears, griefs, cares, desires, &c.,) new speeches, new life: but also without him, new company, &c.

Yea, those things he busieth himself about they yield him continually new matter to be refreshed withal. The favour of God, the blood of Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit, the more they are heard or seen, the more novelty they are to us: the word, the

oftener read, still yieldeth us more knowledge, new comfort, &c. Paul speaketh not of the estate of glory, but of grace, when he saith, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, such things,' 1 Cor. ii. 9. The natural man never perceived them, (and therefore, as Paul reasoneth, the princes of this world could not devise such things to keep people in awe.) They are new when they are first perceived of the godly, and they feel a new, fresh, sweet savour in them as oft as the seeing or hearing of them is renewed, Lam. iii. 23.

Use 1. To wean us from placing our happiness in the study of the creatures. There is no rest in them, no satisfaction to the mind, no such newness as in those things wherein true happiness standeth. Some of the philosophers placed happiness in contemplation, (meaning of the creatures,) but sheweth they were deceived. Many a man thinketh that if he could attain to the knowledge and mystery of this or that trade, he should need no more good; but it is even with trades as with the creatures: they are full of labour, and yet empty of satisfying the mind—empty of newness.

Use 2. To exhort to the study and searching out of the favour of God, the blood of Christ, the grace of his Spirit, the word of God, &c. These will answer our hearts with rest, and fulness, and newness of comfort and contentment.

Use 3. For trial of our happiness, whether we have made right choice of it. If we bend our studies and labours upon things that are full of labour, and yet empty of satisfying the mind with contentment and newness, we have misplaced our happiness.

But if we find rest and satisfaction and newness in the things we are conversant about, it is a sign we have chosen heavenly things to place our happiness in—a right choice.

From the sun's motion, ver. 5, observe,

First, (against Copernicus,) That the sun standeth not still, but the earth, Ps. xix. 5.

Secondly, Against the opinion of such that do think the heavens and planets are moved by intelligences. The same is here said to arise and go down, to hasten, not to be carried or moved passively, Ps. xix. 5. The sun is said freely to run his course, or which is all one, to rejoice to run it.

Thirdly, The sun is endued with life, for whatso-

ever stirreth and moveth itself in his own place is quick and liveth.

There is a double life in things yet coming short of sense. 1. Vegetative, as the plants and herbs; 2. Locomotive, as in the stars.

This also is implied in the order of the works of the creation. Where, proceeding from things less perfect to things more perfect, he mentioneth stars made the fourth day, and herbs and trees the third. The stars therefore, mentioned to be created after some living things, have in themselves a more perfect life.

From the wind's motions, ver. 6, observe,

The freedom of the motion of God's Spirit, blowing where it listeth, John iii. 8.

From the motion of the rivers, ver. 7, observe,

First, The original of fountains to spring from the sea.

Aristotle's reason to the contrary, that water coveteth to run to the lowest place—and if the water should have this vicissitude of course, from the fountains to the sea, from the sea to the fountains, then the same place should be higher and lower than itself—will not hold. For some parts of the sea are lower than the fountains, and into them the fountains send forth their streams to run; other parts of the sea are as high, or higher, than the fountains, especially in great storms, when the waves seem to ascend up to heaven, Ps. cvii. 26. And they by secret channels another way send forth springs of water to feed the fountains.

Plato's *Barathrum*, in the hollow caverns of the earth, which he maketh to be the original of fountains, is hence also refuted, unless he derive the supplying of that *Barathrum* from the sea.

Secondly, That the earth, through which the sea-waters pass to the fountains, doth percolate and strain the salt out of them; else, as the sea-waters are salt, so would also the fountain-waters be.

That some fountains of water are salt as the sea ariseth from the openness of the pores of the earth between the sea and them, which is also the cause of the ebbing and flowing of some of them.

Thirdly, A pattern of thankful returning what we receive to the fountain that supplieth us; as we receive all blessings from God, so let us return all to him.

From the motion of all these together, observe,

First, That all the elements abhor idleness; the sun, (the chariot of fire,) the wind, the waters, are all in continual motion. And though the earth abide and stand, yet it is continually fruitful in breeding and nursing such things as abide upon it, and in it. An idle person, though made and fed of all these, is like none of these—he lazily sitting or lying still, whilst they continually move; diligence in our calling hindereth not the happiness of the resting of our hearts in God.

Ver. 9. *The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is nothing new under the sun.*

Ver. 10. *Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.*

Ver. 11. *There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.*

In these words Solomon sheweth us the want of newness in these things under the sun, and from thence argueth the unprofitableness of the study or knowledge of them to the attaining of true happiness.

This want of newness, first, Is expressed in the end of the ninth verse, 'There is no new thing under the sun;' secondly, Is amplified, 1. By particular induction of that which hath been, and that which is done; they both shall be hereafter, ver. 9.

Secondly, By an *ἐπιμνησθῆναι*, dwelling upon the same point, affirming everything that now seems new to have been in old time, ver. 10.

Thirdly, By removing an objection which is secretly implied: If these things that seem new to us have been in old time, how cometh it we never heard of them before? ver. 11; which is amplified by the like forgetfulness of things now in after ages, ver. 11.

The doctrine of the ninth and tenth verses may be opened in handling this point,

There is no new thing under the sun.

It may seem a paradox at first sight; for it may be said, What is that which all men, like the Athenians, inquire after; news? If there be no new thing, Acts xvii. 21, why are men taxed for hunting after new fashions in apparel? (especially Englishmen, as unfit to be suited as the changeable

moon.) If there be no new thing, will God again destroy the world with water? Gen. ix. 11. Was it a new thing for God to deliver the law with lively voice from heaven? Deut. iv. 32, 33. Was it not a new thing, or shall it be again repeated, the sun to stand still, or to go back ten degrees? Joshua x. 13, 14; 2 Kings xx. 11; a virgin to bear a son? Jer. xxxi. 22; Christ to be born, to die, to rise again, to ascend? the Holy Ghost to descend? the apostles to preach and write the New Testament? Are there not sundry inventions of art new? as guns, printing, and the use of the loadstone. Was not the gunpowder treason new, without precedent of former example?

To answer these, and such-like doubts, many interpretations and limitations of these words have been given, which are not worth the rehearsing; as that of Cajetan, conceiving Solomon to reason from the eternity of time, to argue the circular motion of natural bodies; and that alleged of Origen, touching Plato's great year, of 49,000 years, wherein he would have all the stars to come to the same position, and so all things to return again in the same course. But to touch only those which come nearer to the truth. Some have thought (amongst whom Jerome) that all things now done, were first in God's predestination; but though that be a truth, yet not pertinent here; for God's predestination is above the sun; and things done here according to it, are new still under the sun, as having never been done under the sun before; besides, God's predestination was not in old time before us, but before all time.

Others understand the words as denying new arts; but what will they say of the art of printing?

Others, as Pineda, understand it of no new happiness, nor any new way to attain it.

But Solomon seemeth to speak of the want of new objects to eye and ear, whence it cometh to pass that they are not satisfied, ver. 8.

Others, and that rightly, conceive him to speak of natural things, and their natural actions, *Avicen. sup. Q. 91, A. 1.*

For of these Solomon here discourseth, to prove that happiness cannot be found in the knowledge of these, because they are wanting in newness and variety. As if he should say, *Natura nihil molitur*

novi. Though upon this particular occasion he seemeth to reach further, in denying newness to the common affairs of men in the world.

For, ver. 11, he denieth remembrance of former things, which is not wont to be taken up about natural bodies, or the actions of them, but especially about men and their affairs.

And indeed in civil matters there be the like manners of men now as of old; the like causes and successes of war and peace, &c., whence the knowledge of history of former times is so much behoveful. So in church matters, like disposition of hypocrites, Mat. xv. 8, 9.

Like opposition to the truth by false teachers, 2 Tim. iii. 8; 2 Pet. ii. 1; like security, forerunning general judgments, Luke xvii. 26-30.

Ans. 1. For answer therefore to the former doubts, Solomon speaketh not of God's miraculous and extraordinary actions, whether of judgment or grace; such as the drowning of the world, the standing of the sun, the birth and death of Christ, the writing of the Scriptures, &c., 2 Pet. iii. 4-6.

Ans. 2. He speaketh of natural bodies, and the whole course of nature. Nature worketh now as from the beginning, *Natura nihil molitur novi*, but upon some accidental defect, or superfluity in the matter.

Ans. 3. The artificial inventions of men, though they be new sometimes at first, yet for the kind many of them have been before; and generally none of them continue new long, but wax stale and old like other things, Ps. cii. 26; Heb. viii. 13.

Only God our happiness is always the same, Ps. cii. 27; Heb. xiii. 8, and ever is new. Abraham's covenant is still the new covenant.

Use 1. To shew us the emptiness of the knowledge of the creature to bring us to happiness.

Where newness is wanting, sweetness and full contentment is wanting.

Use 2. To exhort to seek after the favour of God, the blood of Christ, the fellowship of his Spirit, the knowledge of the word, &c. These things yield a daily new freshness, 2 Cor. v. 17; Lam. iii. 23.

Doct. 2. Matters of former times are buried in forgetfulness.

Reason 1. Men's negligence to recount them, or to search after them.

Reason 2. Men's unthankfulness, not rehearsing them to posterity.

Reason 3. Emulation, envying the propagation of others' good name.

Reason 4. God's just judgment cutting off the memory of some persons and things from off the earth.

Use 1. Not to wonder though so many things seem new to us, which yet have been before, seeing former things are forgotten.

Use 2. Not to seek our own glory in this or that good work, to be talked of when we are gone; for we and our works shall be forgotten.

Use 3. To exhort to godliness, which bringeth an everlasting good name, Prov. x. 7; Ps. cxii. 6.

Ver. 12. *I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.*

Ver. 13. *And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things which are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith.*

Ver. 14. *I have seen all the works that are done under the sun: and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.*

Ver. 15. *That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.*

Now followeth, in these verses, the second argument whereby Solomon proveth the vanity and unprofitableness of the study and knowledge of God's works in nature, to the attainment of happiness thereby, taken from his own experience. Where observe,

First, His study of the creatures; and that set forth,

1. By the opportunity he had thereto; he was then king over Israel in Jerusalem, ver. 12.

It was not when he was a child, but when a king, and endued with extraordinary wisdom; yea, a king of a wise people, Deut. iv. 6; and in Jerusalem, the oracle of wisdom.

2. By the diligence he used therein; seen,

(1.) In the subject he employed in the study, his heart; *I gave my heart to it.*

(2.) In the act, seeking, *searching.*

(3.) In the instrument or guide he used, *by wisdom.*

(4.) In the object he was conversant about in those studies; I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom *concerning all things that are done under heaven*, to wit, all the works of God in nature.

3. By the calling he had thereto, ver. 13.

Secondly, His verdict or sentence of all upon his study and search, 'All is vanity,' ver. 14.

Thirdly, The reason of such his sentence; the insufficiency of such knowledge to straighten things crooked, or to supply defects.

Doct. 1. To study the nature and course and use of all God's works, is a duty imposed by God upon all sorts of men, from the king that sitteth upon the throne to the artificer.

This sore travail hath God given to the sons of men, even to kings also, ver. 12, 13; Prov. xxv. 2.

Reason 1. God's glory, which is seen in the creatures, Ps. xix. 1, and cxlv. 10; Rom. i. 20. It is a disgrace to a good workman not to look at his work, but to slight it.

Reason 2. Our own benefit; both of body for health, as in the knowledge of many medicinal things; and of soul for instruction, which may be learned from the creatures; and of the estate for gain, when we know the worth and use of each thing.

Use 1. To reprove the strait-heartedness of most, who study no further the creatures than for necessity or pastime. The gentleman only observeth so much of the nature of dogs, and hawks, and pheasants, and partridges, &c., as serveth for his game. The tradesman looketh only at the nature and use of such things, as whereby he getteth his living, whether sheep, beasts, skins, wool, spices, fishes, fowl, &c.

But studying the nature of all things, which, by observation and conference, men might learn one of another, would enlarge our hearts to God, and our skill to usefulness to ourselves and others.

Rich men have more means, and poor men more vacancy, to seek and get this knowledge; how justly, then, are both reprov'd for wanting heart to it! Prov. xvii. 16. Yea, scholars here are not to be excused who study only some general causes and properties of the creatures, as the principles of universal bodies, their motion, time, place, measure,

&c., but neglect to apply their studies to the nature and use of all things under heaven.

Doct. 2. Those businesses which God setteth us about, we are to set our hearts and best endeavours upon them. God laid this sore travail upon men; and Solomon gave his heart to seek and search, &c.

Reason 1. God's wholly we are, and therefore to employ our whole selves at his appointment.

Reason 2. His blessing is upon the industrious, his curse upon the negligent, Prov. x. 4; Jer. xlviii. 10.

Reason 3. All the opportunity we have of taking pains to any profitable use, is in this life, Eccles. ix. 10. Time spendeth fast, and should be redeemed, Eph. v. 15, 16.

Use. To reprove slackness and idleness in any calling, whether the study of nature or other. It is not for men to say they have nothing to do, or to stand idle, because no man hath hired them, Mat. xx. 6, 7. Behold a world of creatures for thee to study upon. If God lay a sore travail upon the sons of men, it is not for kings to neglect it, but even they to give their hearts this way.

Doct. 3. Such as speak by experience, speak with authority, as Solomon here, ver. 14; Acts iv. 20.

Three things give authority to speech:—

1. Experience.

2. A good calling from God, Amos vii. 10–17.

3. The Spirit of God, and we speaking in the evidence of it, 1 Cor. ii. 4; Acts viii. 13; Mat. vii. 29.

Use 1. To teach young men who want experience to be the more modest in speech, Job xxxii. 6, 7.

Use 2. To teach ministers especially to know by experience the power of the gospel and grace of God in themselves, and then teach it to others.

Doct. 4. They that have best experience of the knowledge of the creature, find both the creatures and the knowledge of them vain and unprofitable to the attainment of happiness, yea, tending rather to the vexation of the spirit, ver. 14.

For the philosophers, by the wisdom gathered from the creatures, knew not God in the wisdom of God—that is, in Christ, in whom alone our happiness is, 1 Cor. i. 20, 21.

Unprofitable to happiness, but rather yielding vexation.

1. Because they lead us not to happiness.

2. There lieth a curse upon the creature ever since the fall, Gen. iii. 17; Rom. viii. 20.

3. Because of the difficulty of the searching out of many secrets in nature, as the cause of the sea's flowing, the motion of the moon, the loadstone's drawing of iron, and looking towards the north pole, sundry sympathies and antipathies of the creatures. It is said by some to be the death of Aristotle, that he could not comprehend the cause of Euripus seven times ebbing and flowing in a day: Because I cannot comprehend thee, saith he, thou shalt comprehend me; and so is said to have thrown himself into it.

4. Because the study of nature healeth not the sinful defects of nature in our own spirits, which is the reason Solomon rendereth, ver. 15.

Use 1. To teach scholars and other students of nature so to study it, as not to place felicity in the creatures, or in the knowledge of them; they are vain and vexing if used to that end. Solomon doth not bring a causeless evil report upon the world, as the spies did upon Canaan.

Obj. But do not many scholars acknowledge they find great contentment, yea, sweetness in the study and knowledge of the creatures?

Ans. 1. True, they may, if they use the creatures and the knowledge of them not to find happiness in them, but to those other ends for which God made them, mentioned in Doct. 1, p. 15.

2. Though many think themselves happy by such speculations, it is because they cast not up their accounts, as Solomon here doth, to see what true reformation of their own perverseness, or supply of their defects, they have found thereby.

Use 2. To teach all men neither to satisfy themselves in such things as reach not to the healing the crookedness of their natures, nor to the supplying of the defects thereof. How vain, then, are they that see not the vanity of wealth, honour, pleasure, all earthly things, which are all of them short herein!

Doct. 5. The crooked perverseness and sinful defects of our nature are not healed by the knowledge of God's works in nature.

A threefold crookedness is in our nature.

1. We act not from a right principle, from God in Christ, but from ourselves.

2. We act not by a right rule, God's will and word.

3. For a right end, God's honour, but our own ends.

Defects also innumerable: first, In gifts; secondly, In acts, as in thoughts, words, and works.

Hence the philosophers themselves, as vicious as others in pride and vainglory, in wantonness, in covetousness, in flattery, &c.

Yea, they are more averse and backward to embrace the gospel than the common sort, Acts xvii. 18, 32.

1. Natural bodies cannot reach to the healing of our souls.

2. The virtue of the creatures is finite, as themselves be; but it requireth an infinite power, even a new creation, to heal our crookedness, and to supply our defects, Ps. li. 10.

Use 1. To shew us the depth of our corruption; no creature is able to make our crooked spirits straight, or to supply our defects, which are innumerable.

Use 2. To stir us up to the knowledge of Christ, whom to know is eternal life, John xvii. 3. He rectifies our crookedness, and supplies all our defects, John i. 16.

Ver. 16. *I communed with my own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.*

Ver. 17. *And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.*

Ver. 18. *For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.*

Solomon having taught us, partly by the nature of the creatures themselves, and partly by his own experience, that happiness is not to be found in the creatures,

He now proceedeth to inquire after happiness, in making trial and use of those blessings which God hath given him:

1. Great estate; 2. Great wisdom.

Which point he delivereth by declaring,

First, His communing with himself, what gifts he

had received, which were two: 1. Great wisdom; 2. Great estate;

Amplified, 1. *a minore*, 'Greater than any before him in Jerusalem.'

2. By the confirmation of it by his experience, ver. 16.

Secondly, His making use of the benefit of both these gifts, and that by a phrase frequent in Scripture, 'I gave my heart to know wisdom,' to wit, to know the worth of it by experience and search.

'And to know madness and folly,' to wit, by experience; thus making use of his great estate to know the worth and benefit of sensual blessings, mentioned chap. ii. ver. 1-10, which to do, in way of seeking happiness therein, he calleth madness and folly, ver. 17, and chap. ii. 3.

Thirdly, His observation of the worth of wisdom: ver. 17, 'I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.'

Fourthly, His reason of such his judgment upon observation taken, from the sorrow accompanying and following wisdom, ver. 18.

Doct. 1. Solomon, in his time, attained to great excellency, both of outward estate and inward wisdom.

His estate was great,

1. In wise princes and counsellors, 1 Kings iv. 1-6, and ii. 6.

2. In provision for his household, 1 Kings iv. 7-19.

3. In multitude and peace of his subjects, and in largeness of dominion, 1 Kings iv. 20, 21, 24, 25.

4. In beautiful¹ keeping, 1 Kings iv. 22, 23; compare this with that of Neh. v. 18.

5. In horses and chariots, 1 Kings iv. 26, and x. 26.

6. In magnificent buildings, 1 Kings vi., vii. 1, 2, &c., and ix. 17-19.

7. In abundance of wealth, 1 Kings x. 14-21; which he got,

(1.) By sea voyages, 1 Kings ix. 26-28.

(2.) By merchandise in Egypt, 1 Kings x. 28, 29.

(3.) By presents, 1 Kings x. 25.

(4.) By husbandry; for those officers that served his household every month were overseers of his herd and flocks and vineyards. This care he adviseth his son, Prov. xxvii. 23-27.

His wisdom was great.

¹ Query, 'bountiful' 1—Ed.

First, By the means of it.

1. From his youth up, by God's blessing in nature, 1 Kings ii. 9.

2. Prayer, choosing it above all blessings, 1 Kings iii. 9-12.

3. Experience, Eccles. i. 16.

Secondly, In the effects of it, 1 Kings iv. 32, 33.

Thirdly, In comparison of all others, 1 Kings iv. 29-31.

Fourthly, In the fame of it, and the use made of it, 1 Kings iv. 34, and x. 1-17.

Reasons of these so great blessings given him of God :

1. The upright-heartedness of his father, 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

2. Because he was to be a type of Christ, who aboundeth in all riches and treasures of wisdom and blessedness, that of his fulness we might all receive supply of all our wants, John i. 16.

Use 1. To teach us the right and ready way to attain wealth and wisdom, and to procure it to our children ; which are,

1. Upright-heartedness ; giving up our wills to be guided by God's will ; for that is a heart after God's heart.

2. Prayer for wisdom, above wealth or any other outward blessing, 1 Kings iii. 11-13.

3. Just and honest dealing, without bribery or partiality. Solomon's throne was established by justice ; he never wronged any.

4. A wise care reaching to the outmost corner of all our affairs.

5. Bountiful dispensing the talents we receive to the public good of others.

Use 2. To teach us not to rest in inward gifts or outward blessings, to preserve us from falling, but in humbleness of heart to depend upon Christ. Solomon with all these blessings fell fearfully.

Doct. 2. It is the part of a wise Christian to consider within himself what inward and outward blessings he hath received.

Solomon communed with his own heart : Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom, &c., Ps. cxxvi. 3.

Reason 1. How shall we else be thankful to the Lord for the blessings we enjoy ?

Reason 2. How shall we else employ the talents we have received to God's best advantage ?

Use. To teach all men, especially great men, to follow Solomon's example herein. A steward that never setteth down his accounts, what he hath received of his lord's moneys, will never make a good account of the expense of it.

We must not be so brutish as the swine or other beasts, that eat what is given them, but never commune with their hearts what they have received.

Ver. 17. *And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly : I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.*

Ver. 18. *For in much wisdom is much grief : and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.*

Doct. 1. To give a man's heart to knowledge is the way to obtain.

'I gave my heart to know,' &c., and 'I perceived,' &c.

Reason 1. From the heart's dominion or commanding power over the whole man. It setteth the senses a-work, to look about and listen ; the mind to understand ; the judgment to consider and observe ; the memory to keep up whatsoever might make for the gaining of knowledge.

Reason 2. The heart set upon a thing will also deal with God about it, and neglect no other means.

Use 1. To teach students to give their hearts to knowledge ; which is done—1. By esteeming it a singular thing ; 2. By cleaving to it with earnest affection.

Use 2. To stir us up to seek the knowledge of that wisdom much more, the beginning whereof is the fear of the Lord. For if Solomon gave his heart here to the knowledge of that wisdom which is gotten by the knowledge of the creatures and human affairs, how much more should we give our hearts to the knowledge of the Creator and our Redeemer, whom to know is eternal life, John xvii. 3. Giving our hearts to this, we shall obtain even this also, Prov. xxiii. 26, and ii. 2-5.

Doct. 2. It is a wise man's part seriously to observe and consider what good he getteth by his own wisdom : ver. 17, 'To know wisdom,'—he meaneth, to know it experimentally, to know the worth and benefit of it.

Reason 1. It is the part of wisdom to observe the goodness of everything—as knowledge observeth truth—and therefore it should not be wanting to observe the goodness of itself. The eye can see each thing but itself; but it is the glory of wisdom (the eye of the soul) to see itself with reflecting upon itself.

Reason 2. Else we shall take this talent in vain, if we do not consider what it is good for; otherwise we shall either undervalue it, or overvalue it.

Use. To reprove a common fault in scholars, who seek to gather more and more knowledge, but never consider what to do with it, or what use to put it to, or what themselves are the better for it. All things but the last end, are no further good than as they lead to him; he only is good in himself and for himself. We need not consider what further good we get by him; to get him is abundantly good enough. To look at anything as good in itself, without looking further what it is good for, is to put it in the place of God, which is flat atheism.

Doct. 3. To give ourselves to make use of our great estate according to the nature of it, will give us to know by experience madness and folly.

Solomon had observed (in ver. 16) that God had given him a great estate and great wisdom. In this 17th verse he giveth his heart to know the use and benefit and worth of both; of wisdom first, and then of his great estate. Now instead of knowing the use and benefit of his great estate, he putteth it to know madness and folly; as if the giving of his heart to make use of it, were to lay hold on madness and folly. Thus he interpreteth himself, chap. ii. 1-11.

Reason. To make use of our great estate, according to the nature of it, is to use it to erect great buildings; to plant vineyards, orchards, gardens; to provide a man's self of store of servants, costly apparel, rich furniture, gold and silver, musical instruments, as is shewn ver. 3-10 of chap. ii.

Now the benefit he had by the use of his great estate was madness and folly.

Madness is a privation of natural reason and natural affection.

Madness, in the original, implieth two things.

1. A fond delight in rejoicing and exalting a man's self; self-applauding.

2. A vainglorious boasting to others, even some-

time with loud clamours and cracking; celebrating a man's self, and affecting to be celebrated of others.

Both these are found to arise in a man's spirit, upon his fair buildings, sumptuous provision, and furniture, and attendance, goodly and pleasant gardens, orchards, &c., Dan. iv. 30.

Folly is a dulness, and fondness or weakness (*Stupor sensus in judicando*, Aquin. ii. 2, Q. 46, Art. 2) the dulness of the understanding to judge and discern of things. So is it with every man employing his great estate in these rich and glorious matters; he shall find discerning and savouring of heavenly things much dulled.

Use 1. To call upon men of great estates to consider what good they get by their great estates, and their employment of them. If they employ them about great buildings, rich furniture, &c., as Solomon did, chap. ii. 3-8, then consider if madness and folly be not their portion.

Use 2. If men's callings require the employment of their estates in sundry of these things, then it becometh them especially to watch over themselves, lest madness and folly grow upon them.

Use 3. To exhort men of great estates to employ them not so much according to nature, which breedeth in the owners madness and folly, as in liberality to the poor, hospitality to strangers, maintenance of church and commonwealth, &c. So may we wisely lay up a good foundation for time to come, Luke xvi. 9; 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.

Doct. 4. Much wisdom bringeth with it much grief, sorrow, and vexation of spirit; and the more wisdom, the more grief.

The wisdom he here speaketh of, is an acquire wisdom—to wit, natural or civil wisdom, gotten from the observation of the creatures, or of human affairs.

Reason 1. From the means used for the getting of this wisdom, reading and meditation, which are weariness to the flesh, Eccles. xii. 12. Study heateth the brain, intendeth and stretcheth the mind, as if the body were stretched on the rack; yea, sometimes to the breaking of a man's wits. As in wrestling there is striving, then weariness, then despair of overcoming, then giving over, then taking it up again; so in study, again and again.

Reason 2. The curse of God upon the body of the

creatures causeth that no use can be made of them, but with some sweat to the body, some grief and vexation to the spirit.

Reason 3. Envy and emulation in others, which breedeth a learned man disturbance, indignation, and vexation, and discontentment; in ourselves, that we are so much neglected, nor better respected than others of less eminency, as we conceive.

Reason 4. The more knowledge we attain, the more we see our own ignorance, which addeth much grief.

Reason 5. Much study drieth up the sweetest moisture in the body, whether blood or marrow; consumeth the cheerful spirits, and so breedeth morosity and harshness, which is a vexation to a man's self and others.¹

Reason 6. The vanity of this wisdom falling short of Christ and his grace, which is true wisdom, 1 Cor. i. 21.

Use 1. To reprove a foolish conceit of ignorant people, that think ministers and scholars eat the bread of idleness, come easily by their living, &c. No calling more wasteth and grieveth him that is occupied therein than theirs doth. The ploughman's employment is a pastime to theirs; his labour strengtheneth his body, but theirs wasteth body and spirit; whence it is the one so long a time outliveth the other.

Use 2. To teach men to bear the more with scholars and wise men's weakness and morosity, they are incident to their callings.

Use 3. To teach wise men to see if this be not the fruit of their wisdom. If yea, then to seek after that wisdom which maketh blessed, and addeth no sorrow with it, Prov. iii. 17.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1. *I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy thy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.*

Ver. 2. *I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doth it?*

From verse sixteen of the former chapter, Solomon hath tried what happiness might be found in his great

¹ Calvin desired the senate of Geneva to pardon his morosity.

wisdom; now he proceedeth to try what happiness might be found in his great estate, in the pleasures and profits which it yieldeth.

Parts, 5:

1. Solomon encourageth himself, in this soliloquy, to enjoy pleasure, ver. 1, since he cannot find happiness in wisdom: 'Go to now, I will prove thee,' &c.

2. He delivereth his judgment of it, ver. 1, 2; it is vanity, madness, good for nothing. What doth it?

3. He hath declared by particular induction the special delights he gave himself to take pleasure in.

(1.) In his diet, wine, ver. 3.

(2.) In his buildings, ver. 4.

(3.) In husbandry.

[1.] Planting of vineyards, and making gardens, orchards, pools of water, ver. 6.

[2.] Storing of cattle, ver. 7.

(4.) Housekeeping.

[1.] Retinue, ver. 7.

[2.] Wealth, ver. 8.

(5.) Music, ver. 8.

4. He amplifieth his enjoying of these,

(1.) By his joint laying hold of (diverse) wisdom, ver. 3.

(2.) By the end he aimed at, in all his pleasure, ver. 3.

(3.) *A minori*, he increased in these above all others, ver. 9.

(4.) By adding all other things like these, ver. 10.

(5.) By his solacing himself in them all, as being his portion, ver. 10.

5. He relateth the issue hereof or event, which was that upon survey he found out all to be vanity, vexation, unprofitableness, ver. 11.

Doct. 1. Conference with ourselves in way of encouragement addeth strength and freedom to our resolutions and purposes, Luke xii. 19; Ps. xliii. 5.

Reason 1. Words are as bellows, to blow up fervency and strength of spirit, as well in ourselves as in others.

Reason 2. They presuppose a judgment satisfied in the lawfulness and expediency of that we go about, out of the abundance whereof the mouth speaketh words of encouragement.

Use 1. To teach us to use this help to stir up our dull hearts, and to strengthen our feeble knees to any good duty, Ps. xxvii. 6, 7, &c.

Use 2. To teach us to use the like conference with ourselves in way of discouragement from sins. The same breath that bloweth up fire cooleth hot water, Jer. viii. 6; Gen. xxxix. 9; Neh. vi. 11; Ps. iv. 4.

Doct. 2. To give up ourselves to pleasure and laughter, to find happiness therein, is vanity, madness, unprofitableness.

Reason 1. There is emptiness in such mirth. In the midst of it the heart is sad; the end of it is heaviness, Prov. xiv. 13; Isa. l. 11; Eccles. vii. 6.

Reason 2. To frolic it in the midst of so many sins and dangers is not the part of a wise man, but of a madman rather, Dan. v. 7; James iv. 9.

Use 1. To reprove the vanity and madness of epicurean gallants, voluptuous livers.

Use 2. To exhort us to believe Solomon's experience, who hath proved it to our hands, and not to place and seek happiness in mirth and jollity, Ps. iv. 6, 7.

Ver. 3. *I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.*

Ver. 4. *I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:*

Ver. 5. *I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:*

Ver. 6. *I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:*

Ver. 7. *I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:*

Ver. 8. *I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I got me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.*

Ver. 9. *So was I great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.*

Ver. 10. *And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.*

Ver. 11. *Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.*

Doct. 1. To give up a man's self to seek his chief joys and happiness in outward comforts and delights, is to take hold of folly.

Solomon, here seeking to give himself to wine, and great buildings and plantings, and gathering of wealth and cattle, as also to great retinue and music, to see what was the chief good thing of the sons of men, saith here of himself, he laid hold on folly, ver. 3.

Reason. These outward delights deeply tasted of do dull and stupefy our minds to the discerning and relishing heavenly and spiritual comforts. And what is folly else but *stupidus sensus in judicando*? Prov. xx. 1, and xxvii. 7; Hos. iv. 11; Gen. xxvii. 4. Isaac's affecting venison perverted his mind and will to divert the blessings of God and his own love from his better son to profane Esau.

Feeding of sweetmeats does take away the taste of our drink; so do these outward delights fed upon infatuate the soul to the disrelishing of the water of life.

Use 1. To shew us how much more folly it is to give a man's self to seek pleasure in unlawful delights, as in drunkenness, whoredom, cards, dice, interludes, &c.

If all lawful fruits tasted on do not satisfy, how much less will it satisfy us, or bless us, to taste of the forbidden fruit?

Use 2. To wean us from placing our chiefest contentment even in these lawful profits and pleasures. It is but folly to set our hearts upon transitory, sensual blessings, which are but trifles in comparison of spiritual and eternal blessings.

Use 3. To stir us up to lay hold of eternal life; the favour of God; the pardon of sin; the grace of God's Spirit; the ways of obedience to God's commandments. This is as true wisdom as the contrary is folly.

Use 4. To watch over our spirits, lest they grow unsavoury, the more we enjoy outward sensual contentments and delights.

Doct. 2. Wisdom may be held with the large seeking after delight in these outward things, but with much hazard.

Solomon in the end almost lost himself in these sensual delights.

Reason 1. *Qui vadit per precipitium, vergit in ruinam.* He that walketh in the uttermost extent of the borders of his Christian liberty will soon degenerate, and fall into some licentiousness.

Reason 2. The body, pampered with all contentments, kicketh against the spirit, Deut. xxxii. 15; 1 Cor. ix. 27.

Use 1. To discourage us from making like trial, as Solomon here did, whether man's chief good might be found in outward pleasures and profits. His wisdom was much hazarded in so doing—yea, blemished and eclipsed. How much less shall our less wisdom hold out in such trials.

Better is it for us to trust and believe Solomon's experience, than to try to our cost and danger as he did.

Solomon himself led himself into temptation by this course. If we will not be warned by his fall, our danger will be the more desperate.

Doct. 3. God alloweth us to rejoice in these outward things, (pleasures or profits,) though not to seek or place our happiness in them.

Reason 1. It is the portion which God giveth a man of all his labour, ver. 1, 10, 24, 26.

Reason 2. It is a just ground, and good help and means, to stir up ourselves to the cheerful and thankful service of God, Deut. xxviii. 47.

Reason 3. It doth good like a medicine, healing some bodily infirmities, and strengthening to each good duty, and to freedom in it, Prov. xvii. 22; Neh. viii. 10.

Reason 4. *Hilaritas in Domino est indicium animi bene sibi conscii:* Godly cheerfulness is a token of a good conscience, Prov. xv. 15.

Use 1. To teach us not to defraud ourselves of such lawful delights as the Lord alloweth us, in the good things we enjoy; we shall do him and ourselves also injury in so doing.

Doct. 4. He that shall take a just account and survey of all the happiness he getteth by his worldly profits and pleasures, shall find for his felicity, vanity; for tranquillity of mind, vexation of spirit; for advantage, no profit.

Reason 1. Of vanity.

1. God never sowed man's happiness in those

outward things; how, then, shall we there reap it?

2. God's curse hath brought vanity upon the whole creature, and all the fruits of it, by reason of our sin, Rom. viii. 20.

Reason 2. Of vexation of spirit.

1. The delusion of our hopes, which we promised to ourselves by these outward things, must needs vex us.

2. The distempering of our bodies, but especially of our spirits, by these sensual delights, must needs grieve a good spirit.

Reason 3. Of no profit.

1. For in them we save not our souls, but rather lose them, Mat. vi. 26.

Use 1. To teach men destitute of these things not to think themselves miserable for want of them; for they that have them are not thereby happy.

Use 2. To teach men that enjoy these things not to presume of more good to be found in them than there is in them. No happiness can be in them; seek that in better things. He that looketh not for much from the creature shall never be much deceived.

If happiness could be found in outward worldly things, how could God be happy without the world, and before the world was made?

Ver. 12. *And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done.*

Ver. 13. *Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.*

Ver. 14. *The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.*

Ver. 15. *Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity.*

Ver. 16. *For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever, seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten: and how dieth the wise man? as the fool.*

Ver. 17. *Therefore I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit*

Solomon, having considered the vanity of wisdom and folly severally and apart, now cometh to consider of them jointly, in comparison one with another, whereof he rendereth the reason, ver. 12, because no man had better experience of both of them than himself. His singular experience, though but of one man, may stand for a general observation, as if it had been proved by the experience of all men. He that should try these things after him should find no more in them than he had done.

Now, upon comparing of them together, he first preferreth wisdom above folly by a comparison.

1. Of light excelling darkness, ver. 13.

2. Of sight excelling blindness; or of him whose eyes are in his head above him who walketh in darkness, ver. 14.

Secondly, He equalleth wisdom and folly by the events happening to the fool and wise alike; whence he falleth,

1. Into an expostulation with himself, why he should then be more wise.

2. Into a resolution or acknowledgment of this vanity, befalling wisdom and wise men, which is to find the like event befalling themselves as fools, ver. 15.

3. He expresseth in particular what these events be which fall equally upon both; to wit,

1. Both to be forgotten alike.

2. Both to die alike, ver. 16.

The effect of which in himself he sheweth by hatred of his life, arising from the sense of the grievousness of this passage of God's work, together with the vanity and vexation of spirit which each thing yieldeth to him, ver. 17.

Doct. 1. He that will judge wisely and fully of things must consider of them, not only in themselves apart, but jointly also, in comparison one with another.

Thus wise Solomon, to give the more right sentence of wisdom and folly, doth not only consider them in their own worth and use apart, (which, in case of placing happiness in either of them, he findeth to be vanity,) but also he turneth his heart to consider them jointly, in comparison one with another.

Reason 1. It is the nature of a comparison to yield much illustration and light to the things com-

pared, which much helpeth the judgment to discern of both of them aright.

Reason 2. In comparing our good things with our betters, it helpeth to abate our pride.

Reason 3. In comparing the evils lying upon us with the greater evils lying upon others, it helpeth our contentment.

Use 1. To teach us to do the like in all such things whereof we would take a just estimate; as in conceiving aright of our wisdom, wealth, poverty, liberty, restraint, credit, discredit, husbands, wives, children, friends, neighbours, &c.; comparing them with the estates of others worse than our own, it will make us the better contented with our own portion; comparing them with the estates of others better than our own, will abate our pride.

Doct. 2. It is for men of Solomon's worth to make Solomon's comparisons.

He knew, by God's own voice to him, that none should succeed him in wisdom and wealth, 1 Kings iii. 12, 13; and therefore he might safely compare his own singular experience of the worth of wisdom and wealth, honour and pleasure, with the experience of all that should come after him.

Reason 1. Unless a man do know his own eminency above all others' in the things whereof he maketh comparisons, he will appear no better than vain-glorious, if not ridiculous. Campian challenging both the universities, though his cause had been as good as he presumed it to be, yet coming short of sundry learned men in the knowledge of the Greek tongue, exposed himself to just disgrace.

Goliath defying the whole host of Israel, and yet not knowing the eminency of the strength of faith above that of spear and shield, made himself a scorn and a prey.

Use 1. To reprove the insolency of boasting spirits, comparing and challenging many times their equals, if not betters, to their own shame in the end. Peter preferring himself before all men, fell worse than any of his fellows; Solomon excelling all, yet maketh comparisons but of equals here, ver. 12, 25.

Doct. 3. It is not for any to hope to find more benefit by the use of wisdom, wealth, honour, pleasure, than Solomon did, ver. 12.

By folly, Solomon means the enjoying of all sensual

comforts, (whereof he spake, ver. 1-11.) such as wealth, honour, pleasure.

Reason, a majore. If he excelled all others in all these things, so far as any of them might be employed to any comfortable, or profitable, or honourable use, it is not for his inferiors in all or any of these, to find more good by them than he had done.

Use 1. To teach all men to content themselves with Solomon's experience, and not to look for more benefit in these things than he found. If he, seeking the chief good in them, found them all vanity and bitterness, we, in following his example, shall find no better success.

But the world will not herein believe Solomon, though he should arise from the dead, and report no less to them.

Doct. 4. There is as much difference in wisdom above wealth, and such other sensual delights, as is in light above darkness, or in sight above blindness, ver. 13, 14.

Light excelleth darkness in sundry points.

Light is comfortable, stirring up to cheerfulness and boldness, Eccles. xi. 7; but darkness breedeth sadness and timorousness.

So wisdom maketh the face of a man to shine, Eccles. viii. 1; but sensual delights leave a man sad and timorous.

1. Light manifesteth things as they be, Eph. v. 13; darkness hideth them.

2. Light distinguisheth one thing from another; darkness confoundeth all alike.

So wisdom discovereth clearly to us the true discernment of things; but voluptuousness overwhelmeth men with stupidity.

3. Light directeth a man in his way; but darkness misleadeth. So is it with wisdom,—it sheweth a man his way; voluptuousness leadeth aside.

4. Light awakeneth us; but darkness lulleth asleep.

So doth wisdom stir up a man to his business; but voluptuousness lulleth a man asleep in laziness and security.

Sight excelleth blindness, as in all the things wherein light excelleth darkness, (for the light of the body is the eye;) so in these things. Besides,

1. Sight is an ornament to the body; blindness a

deformity. By it the body is, as it were, a living dungeon to the soul, without windows.

So is wisdom an ornament to the soul; but the voluptuous person buryeth himself quick in obscurity and deformity, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

2. Sight can discern light if it be shewed to a man; but blindness maketh a man incapable of seeing light offered.

So wisdom apprehendeth counsel and instruction; but the voluptuous person is incapable of either, Hosea iv. 11.

By the voluptuous person, I mean a man seeking happiness in sensual pleasure, whether arising from profit, honour, ease, or pastime, &c.

So Solomon himself understandeth himself, for he saith to himself, I will try thee with pleasure, chap. ii. 1; he thereupon sheweth what trial he took of pleasure in great and honourable works, profitable treasures, musical pastimes, &c.

Use 1. To teach us that men do not straightway condemn all such things, wherein yet they do not place happiness. Solomon will not admit happiness to be found in wisdom, (he meaneth natural or civil wisdom,) and yet he acknowledgeth much excellency, and worth, and use of it.

Use 2. To stir up men to be studious of getting wisdom above wealth, profit, pleasure.

Use 3. To teach wise men and learned more contentment in knowledge, than other men take in wealth.

Doct. 5. The same events, to die, and to be forgotten after death, befall both to the wise man and to the voluptuous epicure alike, Eccles. ix. 15.

Reason 1. The curse of God upon mankind is more powerful to kill and blast men, than wisdom, much less sensuality, can be to preserve their lives and memories.

Use 1. To stir up both wise men and voluptuous to prepare for death, and another life after this. Neither wealth nor wisdom can secure from death.

Doct. 6. Such as employ themselves in getting wisdom and wealth, and other sensual comforts, to the intent to find happiness therein, shall in the end be weary of their wisdom and wealth, yea, even of their lives. Solomon here having so employed his life, in the end cometh to this, Why am I more wise? ver. 15. And therefore I hated life, ver. 17.

Reason 1. These things' not yielding happiness, sheweth us their vanity, and our vanity in seeking it in them.

Again, hope disappointed vexeth the spirit, Prov. xiii. 12, (*a minori*.)

Reason 2. God inflicteth a more special curse upon earthly blessings, when they are set up as *summum bonum* in his stead. God never more powerfully and disdainfully overthroweth Dagon, than when he is exalted with the spoils of his ark. 1 Sam. v. 2-4. So doth God then especially blast worldly comforts, when our heart is carried captive unto them.

Quest. But whether did Solomon well to be weary of his life for this cause?

Ans. No; he should rather have been weary of his sin in seeking happiness in these things.

Life we are not to hate, but for Christ, Luke xiv. 26.

Use 1. To wean men from placing their happiness, as the world generally doth, in these outward blessings. Certainly as it was with Solomon, so shall it be with all such. They shall in the end be weary of all these things, and of themselves also.

Ver. 18. *Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun; because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.*

Ver. 19. *And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity.*

Ver. 20. *Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun.*

Ver. 21. *For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for a portion. This also is vanity, and a great evil.*

Ver. 22. *For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?*

Ver. 23. *For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.*

Solomon, in ver. 17, told us one effect which the consideration of the like event in death to the wise and fool wrought in him, which was his hatred of life.

In this verse he addeth another effect of the same consideration, which was his hatred also of all his labour, ver. 18; which he further amplifieth, first by two causes thereof, which shew the like event befalling to the wise man in death as to the fool. Where

The first is, That he shall leave behind him all his labour, to wit, the great works he hath laboured in, to another that shall come after him, ver. 18.

The second is, His uncertainty of his son's disposition, whether he will prove a wise man or a fool, ver. 19.

Secondly, By the effect of the hatred of his labour: ver. 20, 'Therefore,' saith he, 'I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour,' &c.; which effect he further amplifieth by a double cause.

1. For that he having laboured in wisdom and knowledge and equity must leave the estate he hath so gotten to a man that hath taken no pains for wisdom, or knowledge, or equity, ver. 21.

2. For that his labour hath yielded to himself nothing but sorrows, grief, restlessness, even in the night, ver. 22, 23.

Doct. 1. When we labour for worldly comforts and blessings (such as wisdom, wealth, honour, and pleasure be) to the intent to seek happiness in them, we shall in the end come to see our labour lost, yea, become odious and wearisome to us.

For no man may expect to find more good by his labour after these things than Solomon did, yet this was the issue of all his labour so bestowed.

Reason. As of the former hatred of life, ver. 17.

Quest. But whether did Solomon well, thus to hate his labour for not yielding him that fruit he expected?

Ans. No; for, 1. His labour was commanded of God, and was therefore good, Eccles. i. 13; Gen. iii. 19.

2. His labour had not been in vain if he had used it as God commanded: sundry blessings follow diligent labour, Prov. x. 4, xiv. 23, and xxii. 29.

3. God never gave labour about earthly things that blessing as to yield felicity. It was Solomon's fault to look to reap that fruit from his labour which God never gave it. He should rather have hated the vanity of his own mind, which abused his labour to a wrong end. But Solomon doth well to tell us

plainly how it fell out with him upon his labour so bestowed, that we may also see what we may expect in the like case.

Use 1. To teach scholars that labour for natural or civil wisdom, and other men that labour for wealth, or honour, or pleasure, not to expect or seek greater happiness in them than they are able to yield. If we do, we shall find our labour lost, yea, wearisome to us in the end.

These things we may labour for, but not as our chiefest good, but to some further higher end. If these things be the top of our hopes and desires, and the last end of our labour, we shall lose our labour and happiness both.

Obj. But do not many scholars that seek for no further happiness than learning and wisdom find good contentment therein, free from such hatred of their labours? And so do not many worldlings find the like in their wealth, &c., and never think their labour lost?

Ans. True; but such men never cast up their accounts, as Solomon here did, to see whether they have indeed found true cause of contentment, true happiness indeed, in these things. If they had or did, doubtless they will find no better issue than Solomon had done, ver. 12.

Doct. 2. It is a wearisome and odious thing to seek happiness in those things which we must leave behind us; as Solomon was to leave all those great works behind him, which he had wrought by his great wisdom and wealth, together with all the comforts which they afforded him, 1 Tim. vi. 7, 8.

Reason 1. From the great need we stand in of happiness when we depart hence; yea, then have we most need of it; if otherwise then we fail of it, we become eternally miserable.

Use 1. To shew the excellency of godly men above others; they carry the happiness with them which others leave behind them, Prov. xii. 26. When a worldly wealthy man hath made his will, and left all his estate to such and such, what hath he left himself to carry away with him but the anguish and misery of a guilty conscience, and the expectation of worse?

Use 2. To exhort therefore to labour more for godliness than all earthly blessings. It is, indeed, great gain which will go current in this world and

that which is to come, 1 Tim. vi. 6, and iv. 8. It is a great gain that bringeth God's blessing and no sorrow with it, Prov. x. 22.

Doct. 3. A wise man may have a son grown up to man's estate, and yet be uncertain what he will prove when he cometh to enjoy his father's living.

Solomon old was before he fell into idolatry, 1 Kings xi. 4. and some years he must needs spend in building those temples to his wives' idols, after which time he wrote this book, so that now he was become very old. And therefore Rehoboam could not be young when he wrote it, for he wrote it not long before his death, and at his death Rehoboam was forty-one years old, 1 Kings xiv. 21. And yet Solomon, notwithstanding all his wisdom and deep insight into the nature of all the creatures, and into the manners of men, he was not able to say whether his son would become a wise man or a fool.

Reason 1. From the government of wise parents over their children, which keepeth them in from shewing forth their own spirits: *Donec liberius vivendi sit copia adolescentulis, qui vitam scires aut ingenium nosceres; dum ætas, metus, magister prohibebant?*

Reason 2. From the change of outward estate, which often changeth inward conditions; *Honores mutant mores.* Sixtus, a humble, crouching cardinal, but none so resolute and stout a pope; a cardinal of the Spanish faction, a pope against Spain.

Reason 3. From the various dispositions of some young men especially. Rehoboam himself sometime doth foolishly after his coming to the kingdom, 1 Kings xii. 14; sometimes wisely, 2 Chron. xi. 5, to xii. 13. If he were thus various after he came to the crown, how much more before!

Use 1. To teach youth to take notice of their own uncertainty of spirit, that they may more seek to be established with grace.

Use 2. To teach parents, as much as may be, to season their children with grace, and to teach them in the trade of the best ways especially; and then are they most likely to foresee their constancy, Prov. xxii. 6.

Use 3. To exhort parents to train up their children, above all graces, to humility; for pride is the only sin for which God is wont to strike with madness, Dan. iv. 30-32. That other cause of dis-

traction, to wit, spiritual anguish through brokenness of spirit, Ps. lxxxviii. 15, which Heman fell into, will not blemish reputation of wisdom, 1 Kings iv. 31. God is wont to heal it.

Doct. 4. It is a wearisome vanity, tending to make a man to despair of all his labours, a wise man and an honest man to leave his estate, either to an heir of whose wisdom he is uncertain, or to any who hath not laboured after wisdom and honesty, ver. 19-21. This double vexation befell Solomon; first, He was uncertain what his son would prove—wise or foolish.

2. He saw for the present he took pains neither for wisdom, nor equity, or honesty, as himself had done; yea, it may be he also foresaw what loss of his estate might befall his son—ten parts of it to fall to Jeroboam, a man that made Israel to sin. And yet in Libanus, and other parts of Israel, Solomon had built much, 1 Kings ix. 19.

Reason 1. For so a wise man is likely to be a drudge to a fool, an honest man to a wretch, a painful man to an idle.

Use 1. To wean wise men, and so all men, from voluptuousness, that is, from placing their happiness in earthly comforts. Otherwise it would never have thus vexed Solomon to have been uncertain of his heir.

For it would have contented him, and ought so to have done,

1. To have enjoyed the comfort of his own labour himself whilst he lived, Ps. cxxviii. 2.

2. To have employed them in his lifetime to the good of others.

3. To have trained up his heir with as much good education as he could.

4. To have disposed his estate at his death as wisely as he could.

5. To leave doubtful events to God, who disposeth of all things wisely and justly.

Use 2. To moderate men's eager pursuits after wealth. Little know we what manner of men we labour for.

Use 3. To reprove our carnal confidence, who think to make sure to leave our estates in a good hand, and there to abide from one time to another—a thing more than Solomon could foresee or provide for.

Use 4. To moderate our judgments when we see men's estates fall into the hands of foolish and prodigal heirs; not straight to think they were ill gotten. Solomon had laboured in equity as well as in wisdom, and got all his estate honestly; yet it was scattered (ten parts of it) in his son's days in the hands of a stranger.

Doct. 5. To seek felicity in wealth and pleasure, &c., will put a man to continual grief and restlessness day and night, ver. 22, 23; 1 Tim. vi. 10.

Riches and pleasures are as thorns, not only to choke good seed in us, Luke viii. 14, but also to prick and pierce ourselves with many sorrows.

Reason 1. Their multitudes are a burden, Eccles. v. 12. As many clothes on a man's bed will put him into a sweat, and not suffer him to sleep; so multitudes and abundance of wealth. For they carry with them many cares, fears, and uncertainties.

Use 1. To wean us from seeking such troublesome comforts. Labour we for riches, so as we may have them with God's blessing, which addeth no sorrow, Prov. x. 22.

Use 2. To exhort to labour for spiritual treasure, which makes our sleeps sweet, and our days comfortable, Job xxxv. 10; Ps. lxxvii. 6; Prov. xv. 15.

Ver. 18. *Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun; because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.*

Ver. 19. *And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity.*

Ver. 20. *Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun.*

Ver. 21. *For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil.*

Ver. 22. *For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?*

Ver. 23. *For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.*

When Solomon saw that the exercise of his wis-

dom about the creatures, and his employment of all the creatures unto delight, which he calleth madness and folly, did neither of them satisfy his heart, but both of them alike yield him vanity and vexation of spirit; it gave him occasion to consider whether they were not both of them in comparison equal, or what excellency there was in the one above the other. And this he could as well as any undertake, because he excelled all men in wisdom, 1 Kings iv. 30, and iii. 12.

Doct. 1. A wise man that shall compare together wisdom and folly—that is, the exercise of wisdom about the knowledge of the creatures, and the employment of a great estate to try what chief good there may be found in creature comforts—shall find as much excellency in wisdom above folly, as in light above darkness, in sight above blindness, ver. 13, 14.

See this opened and applied in the notes on pp. 25, 26.

Doct. 2. Though the excellency of wisdom above folly be as great as the excellency of light above darkness, and of sight above blindness, yet one event happeneth both to the wise and foolish; which Solomon proveth by instances; both, 1. Die alike; 2. Are forgotten alike, ver. 14–16.

Reason. From the condition of the creatures, they are temporal, and serve to support a temporal and mortal life; but when this life is ended, we leave them and they leave us.

Use 1. To teach wise men, and fools too, to prepare and provide for another life, and honourable remembrance after it by another course, than either wisdom or wealth.

Faith is the only way—1. To eternal life, John xi. 25, 26; 2. To honour, Heb. xi. 2.

Doct. 3. To consider the like event befalling to the wise and to the foolish, it may breed in a wise man that exerciseth all his wisdom and labour about creatures and creature comforts deep discontentment, sadly to be weary both of his wisdom and of his life, and of all his labour, wherein he hath exercised his wisdom under the sun. Ver. 15, ‘Why was I then more wise.’ Ver. 17, ‘Therefore I hated life.’ Ver. 18, ‘Yea, I hated all my labour.’ Ver. 20, ‘And I went about to cause my heart to despair of all my labour.’

Reason 1. From discerning the equality of the like event to himself as to the foolish,—to wit, 1. To die; 2. To be forgotten; 3. From the necessity of leaving all, ver. 18; 4. From the uncertainty of the wisdom or folly of such to whom he shall leave it, ver. 19, in likelihood to leave all to such as have not laboured in wisdom, knowledge, and equity, as Solomon left all to Rehoboam, who was foolish and weak, 1 Kings xii. 8; 2 Chron. xiii. 7. Jeroboam, who, though industrious, 1 Kings xi. 28, yet laboured not in equity; 5. From the portion which a wise man reapeth of all his labours, to wit, sorrow, grief, restlessness by night, ver. 22.

Quest. But was it well done of Solomon thus to be discontented and weary of these good gifts of God—1. His wisdom; 2. His life, as well as of his labour?

Ans. No; but Solomon did well thus to confess his own distemper before the church, to let them and us all see what we shall get by employment of our wisdom and great estates to seek happiness in creature comforts.

To exercise our wisdom in the knowledge and study of the creatures. To employ them, or to teach others to employ them, in physic and chirurgery, it would never have made a man weary of it in that course. And in like sort to employ our great estate in due supportance and refreshment of ourselves, education of our families, maintenance of church and commonwealth, succour of poor widows and fatherless, as Job did, would never have made a man weary of his labour. But to try to seek what happiness might be found in all creature comforts, that is it which is vanity and vexation, and maketh a man weary of wisdom, life, labour, as if man should employ his wisdom (art and skill) in the secrets of nature, and lay out a great estate to find the philosopher’s stone, what shall he find at length but cause to be weary of his wisdom, life, and labour so bestowed in vain?

Reason 2. From the curse of God upon wisdom, wealth, and labour, bestowed upon an end which God never ordained them unto.

Use 1. For a warning to scholars not to bless themselves in all the wisdom they get by the study of the creatures, nor in all the labour they take about that knowledge so as to make it their end to

excel herein; but so to subordinate all to some of God's ends, that he may accept them and their labours, lest otherwise he make them weary of all through discontentment.

Use 2. To teach men of estates not to bless themselves in their great estates, nor in all the creature comforts they can get by them; it will at length leave them in deep discontentment.

Use 3. To teach us so to use our wisdom and estates, as the employment¹ thereof, the fruit thereof, may not die with us, but may be carried along with us, Rev. xiv. 13. Then it will not grieve us, as it did Solomon, ver. 18, to leave our labours behind us.

Use 4. To endeavour faithfully the good education of our children, that whether they prove wise or foolish, we may have comfort in our conscionable care of their good; and we, faithfully endeavouring their good, shall find God ordinarily blessing our endeavours so far to them, as we shall leave all behind us to them with comfort.

Ver. 24. *There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.*

Ver. 25. *For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto, more than I?*

Ver. 26. *For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.*

There is no good in man that he should eat and drink, &c., even this I saw that it was from the hand of God, &c. Solomon having said that man hath no portion out of his labours, but grief for his travail, vers. 22, 23, he here rendereth a reason of it, taken from the continent or efficient cause of goodness, which he saith is,

1. Not man; it is not in his power to reach it or give it.

2. But God; whatsoever good we receive, ver. 24. Whereof he rendereth a double reason: 1. From his own experience, ver. 25; himself was as able and ready to seek good in the creatures as any, and yet he could get no other good out of them, than as it

is said, vers. 22, 23. 2. From God's manner of dispensing these good things of this life, to wit, the wise and joyful use and benefit of them to the good man, the travail about them to heap them up to the sinner, and that also for the good man's use, ver. 26, which argueth, that the finding of good by all our labours and travail is not in man's hand, but God's. Whereupon he addeth this usual *epiphonema*, that this also is vanity and vexation of spirit, ver. 26. There is no good in man, or in the power of man; so I translate the words in the same sense as the same words are translated, chap. iii. 12.

Doct. 1. To enjoy any good by our labour, yea, so much as to eat or drink with comfort, is not in man's hand, but it is the gift of God, James iv. 13-15; Eccles. iii. 12, 13.

There is a threefold good which our souls might enjoy by our labours: 1. The having of the creature; 2. The use of it; 3. The benefit of that use.

None of these is in the power of our labours to attain unto: 1. Not the having of the creature itself, Eccles. ix. 11; Lev. xxvi. 19, 20; Deut. viii. 17, 18. 2. Nor the use of it either to ourselves, which may be intercepted, as the use of meat and drink, (1.) By sickness, Ps. cvii. 18; Job xxxiii. 20; (2.) By sadness, Ps. xlii. 3, cii. 9, and lxxx. 5; (3.) By sudden fears and dangers, 1 Sam. xxx. 16, 27; 1 Kings vii. 19, 20; Ps. lxxviii. 30, 31; (4.) By covetousness, Eccles. iv. 8, and vi. 2; (5.) By scruple of conscience, Acts x. 13, 14; or to others. 3. Nor the benefit of the use, which is cheerfulness and joy in it; the refreshing and nourishing which the creature might yield, Hag. i. 6; Acts xiv. 17. The benefit of doing good to others is acceptance; but that is of God too, Rom. xv. 31.

Reason 1. Since the fall, the good which God put into the creature, Gen. i. 31, is accursed to us for our sin, so that now labour and sorrow is all our portion from the creature, Gen. xvii. 19. 2. Goodness residing chiefly in God, is to be found in the creature only by participation, and that at his pleasure, Mat. xix. 17. By Adam's fall goodness is devoted to the second Adam; to wit, the goodness of the creature, Heb. ii. 6-8; hence from him it is derived to us.

Use 1. To reprove, first, Confidence in ourselves for the getting of this or that good by any means

¹ Query, 'enjoyment';—ED.

we can use, James iv. 13-15; secondly, Acknowledging the good we have to come from our own means, Hab. i. 16; Amos vi. 13; thirdly, The abusing of meats and drinks and other creatures to vanity, riot, and mischief, &c. The gifts of God are to be used to his service and praise, Hos. ii. 8. 9.

Use 2. To exhort to look up unto God for the finding of good in all the means we use, and to acknowledge him in the attaining of it. The heathens did so to their false gods, how much more we to the true? Dan. v. 4. We thank our host for our good cheer, how much more should we thank God for it? 3. To teach us to look up to God, that we may find good in his ordinances especially; for spiritual and eternal good things are least of all in the power of the creature to give or to receive.

Doct. 2. It is not for any man to look to find more benefit by his labours, or by the creatures gotten and used by him, than Solomon did.

Reason. No man knew the creatures better than he, nor how to use them to better purpose; neither can any man go about to get benefit by them more wisely or more seriously.

Use. To teach us to content ourselves with his experience. If he found no happiness by all his labours about the creature, if he found nothing by the creature but his labour for his travail, no more shall we, if we depend upon our labour, or upon the creature, or seek happiness in either.

Doct. 3. God giveth to the godly wisdom, knowledge, and a cheerful use of the fruits of his labour, but to the wicked labour and drudgery for the benefit of the godly, ver. 26. A man good in God's sight is here meant the godly, as opposed here to the sinner, Job xxvii. 13, 16, 17; Prov. xxviii. 8.

Reason 1. It is the end of God's predestination that all things befalling the wicked should redound to the glory of God's mercy towards the elect, Rom. ix. 22. 2. The godly, having Christ, have the world as theirs, and all the comforts of it, 1 Cor. iii. 21-23. 3. The godly, using the creatures and their own labours about them, in their right place and kind, reap that benefit from them which any way they can yield, Mat. vi. 33. They in that way find the blessing of God, which exempts from sorrow, Prov. x. 22. But the wicked, taking the creatures for their chief good, fall short of God, and of that good also from

the creatures, and their labours about them, which otherwise they might attain.

Obj. But doth it not oft fall out contrary, that the wicked have the world at will, and not so the godly? Job xxi. 7-13; Ps. lxxiii. 3-5, and xvii. 14.

Ans. 1. It is so as Solomon speaketh here with many godly—they enjoy a wise and cheerful use of their labours and of the creatures; and, contrariwise, many wicked labour and toil, and that uncomfortably, for the good of the godly. 2. A little the righteous hath is better than great treasures of many wicked, Ps. xxxvii. 16; for (1.) The joy of hypocrites and worldlings is but for a moment, Job xx. 5; Isa. i. 11. (2.) Their prosperity is pernicious to them, Prov. i. 32. (3.) The great estate of wicked men never resteth till it be devolved into the hands of the godly, but is meanwhile tossed as a tennis-ball from one hand to another, from one family to another.

Use. To exhort to godliness. The godly are good in God's sight; they have comfort of their labours. The wicked men's labours is also for their benefit and comfort.

Doct. 4. The disappointment of a man's labour is a vanity and vexation of spirit, especially to such as seek for happiness in their labours about the creatures, ver. 26.

Reason. It is a curse of God, Lev. xxvi. 16.

Use. To stir us up the more to godliness. Thereby we shall find good in our labours; or if we be disappointed, that also will work our further drawing near to God, Hosea ii. 6, 7.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1. *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:*

Ver. 2. *A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;*

Ver. 3. *A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;*

Ver. 4. *A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;*

Ver. 5. *A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;*

Ver. 6. *A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;*

Ver. 7. *A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;*

Ver. 8. *A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.*

Ver. 9. *What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?*

To everything there is a limited term, (or period,) and a time to every will (or purpose) under the heaven, &c. Solomon having shewed the vanity of all the creatures towards the attainment of felicity; and that, first, Partly by their own nature, chap. i. 1-11; secondly, Partly by the great experience and trial which himself had taken of them—both in. first, The knowledge and study of them, chap. i. 12-18; 2. The employment and improvement of them to sensual delights, chap. ii.—he in this chapter (the former part of it) and these words sheweth the vanity that lieth upon the estate and actions of men, by the vicissitude and variety of them, and that by the determined appointment and limitation of God's purpose and providence.

Parts of the words—first, An assertion that all things under heaven are subject to variety and vicissitude of changes, and that by the determinate appointment and limitation of God, ver. 1-8; 2. A collection or inference of the unprofitableness of men's labours in regard thereof. The assertion he first delivereth in a general proposition, ver. 1; secondly, He declareth and proveth it by an induction of twenty-eight particulars, ver. 2-8. In the assertion, the word translated *season*, is a set or limited time or a determinate period; as the word is used for an appointed set time, Ezra x. 14; Neh. x. 34. And the meaning is not to shew there is a fit season allowed us of God for all things done under heaven: for, first, That is not true; if it were, what is that to demonstrate the vanity or unprofitableness of men's labour about the creature, which is here the scope of Solomon? And when he saith, to every purpose, or, as it is in Hebrew, to every will, he meaneth, by a metonymy, to everything which a man willeth, or purposeth, or performeth. In the induction, the twenty-eight particulars consist of fourteen pair of contraries, wherein a man changeth from one contrary estate

or course unto another: whereof the first pair is natural, to be born to die; secondly, The rest voluntary, and they are either, first, Private and domestical, as a time, 1. Of planting and pulling up; 2. Of breaking down and building; 3. Of weeping and laughing; 4. Of mourning and dancing; 5. Of casting away and gathering stones; 6. Of embracing and refraining; 7. Of getting and losing; 8. Of keeping and casting away; 9. Of rending and sewing; 10. Of silence and speech; 11. Of love and hatred. Secondly, Politic, as, 1. Of killing and healing; 2. Of war and peace.

Doct. 1. The times that pass over us bring upon us many changes, yea, often from one contrary to another.

Doct. 2. To every change that befalleth us, even to every state and business of men under heaven, there is a time limited and determined by God.

Doct. 3. This change of men's estates, and the limitation of the times thereof, leaveth a man no profit by all his labour towards the attainment of happiness. But, for brevity sake, all these may be handled together.

Doct. 1. As the main proposition of the text.

Doct. 2. As the principal reason of it.

Doct. 3. As the chief use of both.

For proof of the first doctrine, Ps. xxx. 5-7; Lam. i. 1, 2, and iv. 1, 2, 7, 8; Isa. i. 21, 22; John xxi. 18. The people sometimes cry Hosanna, sometimes Crucify; Peter sometimes maketh a glorious confession of Christ, sometimes a gross denial; Paul sometimes as an angel of God, Gal. iv. 14, sometimes an enemy, Gal. iv. 16. Nebuchadnezzar sometimes flourishing in his palace, sometimes grazing among the beasts, restored again.

Reason 1. From the determinate purpose of God to limit men's times and changes, Job xiv. 5, and vii. 1; John vii. 30, and viii. 20; Luke xiii. 32, 33, and xxii. 53; Acts xiii. 25, 26; Ps. xxxi. 15; Acts xvii. 26; Dan. v. 26. Grounds whereof; first, God's sovereignty over us, and so his dominion over our times, Acts i. 7. The heir, while under age, hath his time limited, Gal. iv. 1. Secondly, God's faithfulness to us, Ps. cxix. 75. If our times were in our hands, we would never see ill times; if in Satan's hands, he would never suffer us to see good days. Thirdly, Our aptness to settle upon the

lees, and to corrupt if not changed. Zeph. i. 12; Jer. xlviii. 11; Ps. lv. 19. 2. From the contrary principles dwelling in us; whence variety, yea, contrariety of changes of carriage. Gal. v. 17. 3. From the instability of all the creatures, and their outward estates, by reason of the curse, Gen. iii. 17; which though to the godly it be changed to a cross, yet the cross abideth to them, the curse to the wicked, 1 Kings xiv. 15.

Use 1. To wean us from fastening our hopes and desires after happiness in any estate here below, Mat. vi. 19, 20; Prov. xxiii. 5; 1 John ii. 15, 17. The unsettledness of all things here below demonstrateth their unprofitableness unto happiness. 2. To keep us from presuming of our own undertaking, and from possession of absolute purposes and promises, without subjection to the will of God, James iv. 13–15; Luke xii. 19, 23; Prov. xxvii. 1. 3. To moderate our mourning in hard times, and our rejoicings and confidences in good hours, Ps. xxxix. 9, and cxv. 3; Micah vii. 7, 8; Ps. xxx. 6, 7. 4. To stir us up to seek and wait for a settled mansion in heaven, Heb. xiii. 14. 5. To take off the plea for dancing hence; for it is not said there is a lawful time to dance, but a limited time. Herodias' daughter, Salome, had a time to dance, as to earn half a kingdom for a dance, and to get John Baptist's head. So another time, of a contrary dance, when falling through the ice (if we may believe Nicephorus, lib. i. cap. 20) her feet capered under water, and her head being cut off by the ice, it danced above the ice.

We read, first, Of a religious dance, Exod. xv. 20; secondly, Of a civil dance to entertain conquerors, Judges xi. 44; 1 Sam. xviii. 6; Luke xv. 25; when the eyes are set upon joy. But not in marriages, where is more temptation to lust. Tully pro Muræna! *Nemo saltat sobrius nisi forte insaniat, neque solitudine neque in convivio honesto et moderato*; especially it is unmeet in New England, and that now when the churches of England are in such distress, Ezek. xxi. 10.

Ver. 10. *I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.*

Ver. 11. *He hath made everything beautiful in his time; also he hath set the world in their heart; so that*

no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

Solomon in the former verses of this chapter argueth the vanity that lieth upon the estate and actions of men by reason of the vicissitude and variety of them, and that limited and determined by the appointment of God; and from thence he inferreth the vanity and unprofitableness of men's labours to seek for happiness in creature comforts, ver. 1–9. Now, therefore, lest men should slightly pass over these varieties of changes that pass over them, and make no profitable use of them, as if they came by fortune or change, or God's neglect of the government of the world, Solomon here preacheth to us a fourfold profitable use and observation of them.

1. That God hath given this travail to the sons of men to exercise themselves in observing and finding out God's work in them all, ver. 10; as, 1. Having made everything beautiful in his season; 2. Having put the world in the hearts of men, ver. 11.

2. That whatsoever our estate be, we should not look to find the chief good in them, but be doing good with them, vers. 12, 13; and take such good from them as they afford, vers. 12, 13.

3. That these changes are wholly and unchangeably in God's hands, and aim at a gracious end, that men should fear before him, ver. 14.

4. That there is to be observed a settled order in this variety of changes, as in the motions of the heavens, ver. 15.

Doct. To consider and find out the work of God in all the variety of changes that by his appointment do pass over us, it is a travail given of God to exercise the sons of men. As in searching out the creatures, it was a travail given of God, Eccles. i. 13; so here to search out the work of God in all changes that befalls us, Ps. cxi. 2–4.

Reason 1. From the beauty to be observed in every work of God—that is, in every change befalling us—in its season. To the beauty of the body there concur three things: 1. *ὁλοληγία*, when no member is defective or superfluous, good constitution; every maim is a blemish, every superfluity is a deformity. 2. *συμμεγρία partium*, when one part is proportionable to another, and all suitable to their end and to their head, good proportion. 3. *ὁ-*

zōia, well-colouredness, or well-favouredness, good complexion. So in God's works about us there is.

1. A perfection, as in the creatures, Isa. xl. 26, so in his government of us, Deut. ii. 4; Isa. v. 4.
2. A symmetry or proportion, first, Between the Lord and his work, 2 Tim. ii. 13; Ezek. xx. 9, 14, 22. Secondly, Between his former and latter works, Judges vi. 13, 14. Thirdly, Between the instrument and the work God doth by it, *multum refert Duvusne loquatur an herus*. Arrogant cruelty becometh Pharaoh; profane blasphemy, Rabshakeh; cursing, Shimei; treason, Judas, Isa. xxxii. 6, 8. Fourthly, Between God's dealings with us, and ours with him, Ps. xviii. 24-26. The wild-fire of lust in Sodom was punished with wild-fire and brimstone. So in destroying the Egyptians' first-born, Exod. iv. 22, 23; so in Nadab and Abihu; so in Adonibezek, Judges i. 6, 7. 3. *ivzōia*, well-favouredness. It is a beauty in the countenance: first, Cheerfulness; secondly, Lightsomeness. First, There is a cheerfulness in God's work at last, Gen. xlv. 7, 8; James v. 11; Heb. xii. 11. They have a pleasant countenance, Ps. xcii. 4, and lviii. 10. Secondly, There is a lightsomeness in them, giving light and instruction, Ps. cvii. 43.

Reason 2. From God's putting the world into our hearts, ver. 11; where by the world is meant, first, Not only the creatures, the world of them; secondly, But chiefly the world of changes of the creatures, of which Solomon here speaketh—'hath put the world into their hearts'—implieth that God hath put into our hearts, first, Some desire and delight to search and find out the work of God in all the changes that pass over us. So putting into the heart implieth desire and delight in a thing, Ps. xl. 8. Secondly, Ability to do it, Jer. xxxi. 33. Both together are expressed by that phrase, Rev. xvii. 17. The ground of which is our impotency and impossibility, without this putting the world into our hearts, that ever we should find out the work of God from beginning to the end, ver. 11.

Use 1. To stir us up to observe and find out the work of God in every change of estate that passeth over us. It is else a brutishness in ourselves, Ps. xcii. 5, 6; it is a dishonour to God and to his works, Isa. v. 12; it is an enlargement of knowledge and favour from God to consider his works, Ps. cvii. 43. As when a good workman

seeth a man taken with his work, he is willing to shew him all his art in it. 2. To teach us not to disparage, or slight, or dislike any of God's works, but to magnify them. They are every one beautiful in his season, Job. xxxvi. 24; Isa. xlv. 9; Ps. lxi. 9. This magnifying of every work of God, as beautiful in his season, will keep us from discontentment and murmuring at God's providence, whatsoever it be that befalleth us or ours, Job i. 20; Ps. xxxix. 9; 2 Kings xx. 19. It may seem an uncomely thing to take fair and full clusters of sweet grapes, and to tread them and press them in a wine-press, to leave nothing in them but husks, till in the end you see what sweet wine is pressed out of them, which keepeth lively and sweet, when else the grapes left alone would be rotten.

Use 3. To teach us to improve and employ that knowledge of the world—that is, of all the changes that befall us in the world—which God hath put into our hearts, to find out the counsel and work of God therein. It was happiness to Esther in her advancement, Esther iv. 14; to David in crosses, Ps. cxix. 67, 71, 75.

Obj. Yea, saith one, if I could spell out God's meaning in his works and dealings with myself and mine, it would give me great contentment.

Ans. 1. In evils observe, first, What thou wast doing when a cross befell thee, Dan. iv. 30, 31; secondly, What conscience suggesteth to thee, Gen. xlii. 22; thirdly, The proportion of the affliction to thy sin, Judges i. 7; fourthly, Cast all idols out of thy heart, and inquire of the Lord his meaning, that thou mightest know it and do it, Ps. xxv. 9, 12. God was long in answering Johanan and his company, even long after a Sabbath, because they sought in hypocrisy, Jer. xlii. 20.

2. In good things observe, first, The opportunities and advantages God putteth into our hands, according to his word, Esther iv. 14; secondly, The great works God hath in hand; and derive your brooks to run into that stream, Jer. xlv. 4, 5. Now God is advancing a reformation, pursue we that.

Ver. 12. *I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.*

Ver. 13. *And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour: it is the gift of God.*

I know good—that is, the good of man—is not in them. These words contain in them the second profitable observation which Solomon hath made of the variety of the changes of our creature-comforts and discomforts, and employments about them; to wit, that the good of man is not to be found in changes of creature-conditions, and employments or labours about them, but to enjoy the good of them, and to do good with them; which he amplifieth by a twofold argument or reason.

Reason 1. From his own certain judgment or experience of them: ‘I know that good is not in them,’ ver. 12.

Reason 2. From the proper cause of any good or comfort that a man can either take himself or give to others by the creatures, or by his labour about them: ‘it is the gift of God,’ ver. 13.

Doct. The good of man is not to be found in the creatures; but it is from the gift of God to do good with them, or to enjoy the good of them. His meaning is not that there is no good in the creature, for that were contrary to Gen. i. 31; but that, 1. The chief good of man is not in them. 2. That it is not in themselves to minister their own good to us without the gift of God, Job xxviii. 2–12, &c., to the end of the chap., Eccles. ii. 24.

Reason 1. From the end of all the creatures, and of all their changes about man, and of our labours about them. They are all for us as their end, Ps. cxv. 16; Gen. i. 26; Deut. iv. 19, and therefore our good cannot lie in them; but their good rather lieth in us.

Reason 2. From our forfeiture of the good that is in them by the fall, that now the good in which they were created, 1. Is much impaired. 2. Is not yielded to us without a renewed gift from God, Gen. iii. 17–19; which curse is increased by actual sin, Gen. iv. 12; Isa. vii. 23, 24; Lev. xxvi. 18–20; Hag. i. 6, and ii. 16, 17. 3. From the emptiness of our hearts to do any good, or to make any good use of what changes befall us, Hosea xiv. 8; John xv. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 5. 4. From the prerogative of Christ, as to teach us to profit, Isa. xlviii. 17; God in covenant, the Holy One of Israel, our Redeemer.

Use 1. To set before us the frame of the spirit of a Christian penitent soul; it knoweth his good is not in the creature, nor in any creature comfort, nor in any creature changes, nor in any creature labours.

Use 2. To look for no more from the creatures than is in them, and that way wherein we may get it out of them. Chief good is not in them; nor can they yield that good which is in them, but by the gift of God. With the gift of God, and by it, you may eat and drink, and rejoice in the enjoyment of the good of your labours, and do good to others in your lifetime by the creatures.

Use 3. To move men to repentance that have restrained the good of the creatures from themselves, Exod. xxii. 22–24; Jer. v. 24, 25.

Use 4. To seek and expect the good of any creature, or of our labour about it, by prayer and faith in the blood of Christ, Mat. vi. 11; 1 Tim. iv. 3–5.

Use 5. To stir up such to thankfulness as both take good and do good by all the changes that pass over them. It is God that worketh the power of the will to will, and the power of the whole man to do; and therefore we are to fear before him, Phil. ii. 12, 13, else a wise man may act foolishly, and a strong man weakly, in many fair opportunities.

Ver. 14. *I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.* Coherence, see in ver. 10, 15.

Doct. What God himself doeth, that taketh place in every age, without any addition to it, or taking aught from it by any creature.

The meaning of the words cannot be, that every work of God is everlasting; for no work of God is so, but the angels and souls of men, the highest heavens, and the bodies also of men after the resurrection. But whatsoever God doeth, that shall be for ever; to wit, it shall take place in every age. It is not (to wit, for the creature) to add to it; it is not to take away from it, Ps. xxxiii. 9–11; Eph. i. 11; Job xxiii. 13, 14; Mat. v. 36, and vi. 27; Prov. xix. 21 and xxix. 26; John xix. 10, 11. Some grant a general concurrence of God’s providence to everything done by the creature, seeing he sustaineth all things in their life, motion, being; but do not acknowledge a special concurrence to the producing of it, unless the act be supernatural. But surely, as God inclineth and determineth the will by gifts of grace, by motions of the Spirit, (exciting and enlarging

the heart,) and good objects unto spiritual acts; so doth he incline natural agents to natural acts by natural dispositions; and voluntary agents to moral and civil acts by moral and civil dispositions, motions, objects, Exod. xii. 36; and casual agents to casual events, by casual occurrences.

Reason 1. From the nature of God. He is the first and universal cause, Eph. i. 11; Rev. i. 8; Rom. xi. 36, and therefore concurrerth to every effect. Adam, under God, is the first cause of all the sons and daughters of men, Acts xvii. 26; but he is not the cause of all their actions, for he produceth them voluntary agents; and therefore, what they do by choice of their own will, he is no cause of that, seeing he inclineth not, nor determineth their will to it, save only as he propagateth to them natural pravity. Thus, he was not the cause of Cain's murder of Abel, which is more plain in other parents; *causa causæ est causa causati*, holdeth in natural agents, not voluntary. But God is the first cause, not only of all causes, but of all effects: first, Of good things *per se*, James i. 17; Hosea xiv. 8. Secondly, Of evil things, by accident or occasion, Acts iv. 27, 28; 2 Sam. xii. 11, 12.

Reason 2. From the nature and condition of the creatures. They are all God's instruments, Heb. i. 14; Isa. x. 5, 15, and xlv. 28; Joel ii. 25; Mat. viii. 8, 9.

Obj. 1. The creatures may be said to be God's instruments, because he may and doth use them when he will, not that he doth always use them.

Ans. Yes; always, when they work at all. The devil himself, and all his instruments, are indeed but God's instruments. So faith beholdeth them, Job i. 21. Hence always God's ends are more fulfilled than the ends which the instruments aimed at, Gen. xlv. 7, 8, with xxxvii. 20.

Obj. 2. Hosea viii. 4.

Ans. It is meant, not of his providence, see 1 Kings xii. 24, but of his ordinance.

Obj. 3. Zech. i. 15.

Ans. They helped forward destruction beyond God's approbation, but not beyond his providence.

Obj. 4. What need then of counsels, commandments, rewards, and punishments?

Ans. As if the wind need not blow, because a windmill cannot move but in and by the wind.

These commandments and counsels, &c., are the blasts by which God moveth us.

Obj. 5. Thus you take away freewill from the creature, not only in acts of spiritual grace, but even in moral and civil actions.

Ans. No such matter; for God determineth all actions, not by imposing necessity upon the will, but by inclining it according to the nature and liberty of it; to wit,

1. In good actions, by, first, Infusing good gifts, Exod. xii. 36; secondly, Exciting by good motions; thirdly, Propounding good objects.

2. In evil actions, by, first, Eliciting the evil within into outward act; first, By leaving to Satan, and to evil objects, John xiii. 2; secondly, By propounding good objects, Ps. cv. 24, 25. Secondly, Occasioning the choice of evil, as Adam's fall; first, Making the subjects mutual and declinable; secondly, Giving leave to instruments to tempt, as Satan in the serpent. Thirdly, By propounding objects: fair fruit, good name.

Use 1. To teach us to fear before the Lord, text; Phil. ii. 12, 13; Jer. x. 5-7. Our Saviour calleth us to 'fear him, that can cast both body and soul into hell,' Luke xii. 4, 5; how much more to fear him that can cast both body and soul into sin, which is worse than hell, and yet himself most pure and holy in so doing, Isa. vi. 3, 9, 10.

Use 2. In God's fear to acknowledge him in all our ways, as those who can do nothing without him, and who worketh all our works for us, Prov. iii. 5, 6; Ps. lvii. 2; Isa. xxvi. 12.

Use 3. To look higher than the creature in all things befalling us, which will train us up to, 1. Patience in evils. 2. Contentment in evils, Job i. 21; 2 Sam. xvi. 10; Ps. xxxix. 9. 3. Thankfulness for that which is good, Gen. xxxiii. 10; Neh. ii. 8; Ezra vii. 27. 4. Fruitfulness, or making a good use of all occurrences, whether good or evil, befalling us. If God's hands be in everything, surely good may be gathered out of it, Ps. cxvi. 16; Amos iv. 6, 8, 11. 5. Courage in all approaching danger; all our hairs are numbered; a sparrow falleth not to the ground without God, Mat. x. 29, 30.

Use 4. To teach us the vanity of all human endeavours and purposes without God, James iv. 13-16.

Ver. 15. *That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requirereth that which is past.*

Coherence, see above, ver. 10. 11.

These words express the fourth observable thing in the changeable course of God's providence about the sons of men: to wit, that there is a settled order and constancy in that instability, as there is in the motions of the heavens and heavenly bodies. There is great variety of changes in the moon, yet great constancy in that variety; as it was in one month, so in another.

Solomon had such a like speech before, Eccles. i. 9, 10; but there he speaks of the works of creation or of nature, as spring, summer, autumn, winter, &c., but here he speaketh of the work of providence.

That which hath been is now, &c. Not that the same individual things shall return again, for dead men shall return no more into this world, Job vii. 8-10; neither doth he speak of God's extraordinary and miraculous actions, whether of judgment or mercy, Exod. x. 14; Deut. iv. 32, 33; Joshua x. 12-14; 2 Kings xx. 11; nor of the rare and singular inventions of men, as of printing, or guns, &c. But he speaketh of the works of God's ordinary providence, in disposing of the variable changes of the estates and affairs of the sons of men: which though they be carried with great variety, yet are they carried also with great stability and correspondency, and suitableness one to another.

Doct. 1. The former ways and works of God in disposing of the estates of the sons of men. God bringeth them about again from one generation to another, 2 Pet. ii. 4-9; Rom. xi. 21; Jer. vii. 12-14; Ps. xlviii. 8; 1 Cor. x. 11. God's former dealings with the sons of men in former times are precedents of what he will do in after ages.

Reason 1. From God's nature, which is ever like itself, Heb. xiii. 8, 10, 12, 28, 29; Mal. iii. 6. 2. From the correspondency of God's works to his word. Every work of God fulfilleth either some promise in the word, or some threatening; now the word is ever suitable to itself; so is God's work. The examples of God's dealings in Scripture would be of no use to us, if they were not precedents and patterns of the like to be performed in like cases in after times, 1 Cor. x. 11; Rom. xi. 21; Joshua

i. 5; with Heb. xiii. 5; James v. 11, and ver. 17, 18.

Use 1. Against Manichees, who think one God to have governed in the Old Testament, another in the New. But the suitable carriage of all things now, as then, argueth the same hand to rule both then and now, Heb. xii. 29. It is also a refutation of fortune; for fortune is not stable, nor keepeth any certain or proportionable course. 2. To lend both comfort and stay, and warning also, to God's people, from the course of God's providence to his people of old, Ps. xxii. 4, 5, and lxxvii. 10, 11; yea, from God's former dealings with ourselves, Ps. lxxvii. 6; 1 Sam. xvii. 34-37; warning also, Heb. xii. 28, 29; Ps. xcix. 6-8. Beware of breaches in general course; it will presage and produce like effects, as breach of parliaments hath done in England. 3. To threaten to wicked men like judgments which have befallen others for like sins in former ages, Dan. v. 18-28; 2 Pet. ii. 4-9; Jude 11; Job iv. 8. 4. To teach the children of God to persevere in like constancy, and to keep a holy correspondency in all their actions and courses, that we may be like to our heavenly Father.

Ver. 16. *And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.*

Ver. 17. *I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.*

In the former part of the chapter Solomon shewed the vanity of the estates of men, by an argument taken from the changes and vicissitude which the determinate hand and providence of God did put upon them. In these verses he observeth and declareth another vanity that befalleth our estates by the hand and government of magistrates; yea, a vanity that befalleth upon judgment-seats themselves. The vanity is wickedness, which is both, first, Ungodliness, 2 Sam. xxii. 22; secondly, Unrighteousness, Isa. lviii. 4, 9. And lest this vanity should cast some blemish upon the wise and just providence of God (whereof penitent souls are more tender) he declareth his resolution of that doubt, what it was in his own heart, that God will judge

¹ Query, 'Courts'? viz., church-courts.—ED.

righteously, and so reform all the iniquity of judgment-seats; and this he proveth by a principle delivered in ver. 1 of this chapter, taken from the time appointed for every purpose and every work there, ver. 17.

Doct. 1. He that shall live in the best times of the best commonwealths, may see seats of judgments and justice corrupted with wickedness and iniquity. The word *wickedness* signifieth both, first, Ungodliness, 2 Sam. xxii. 22; secondly, Unrighteousness, or iniquity, Isa. lviii. 4, 6. Solomon speaketh not of markets, or taverns, or stews, or mountains of prey, (Stand-gate Hole, Shooter's Hill, Blackheath, Salisbury Plain, &c.,) but of seats of law and justice; and that not in the reign of wicked tyrants, Saul, Ahab, Jezebel, or the like, but in the times wherein himself lived, which were the best which the best commonwealth, the commonwealth of Israel, ever saw, even the times of David and Solomon. In David's time, 2 Sam. xix. 24-30, with xvi. 4; in his time, and Solomon's, Eccles. x. 5-7; 1 Kings xi. 6-8, and xii. 4; in Asa's time, 2 Chron. xvi. 10; in Jehoshaphat's, 2 Chron. xviii. 1, and xx. 33-37; in Uzziah's and Jotham's, Isa. i. 21-23, v. 7, and iii. 12, 15; in Hezekiah's, Micah vii. 3, 4, and iii. 9-12, with Jer. xxvi. 18; in Josiah's, Zeph. i. 1, 9, and iii. 1, 3.

Reason 1. Acceptance of persons; in the princes promoting their kinsmen or friends, though unworthy, to judgment seats, as Samuel promoted his sons, 1 Sam. viii. 1, 3.

Reason 2. Misinformation, and receiving it without hearing both parties speak, 2 Sam. xvi. 1-4, with chap. xix. 26, 29.

Reason 3. Wicked servants or counsellors about a prince, Prov. xxv. 4, 5; 1 Kings xii. 8-11.

Reason 4. Self-sufficiency, leaning to a man's own wisdom, Joshua xiv. 15; Prov. iii. 5-7.

Reason 5. Bribes or gifts, 1 Sam. viii. 3; Exod. xxiii. 8; Prov. xxviii. 21.

Use 1. To teach us not to wonder, if we find sometime the like errors here in our courts. We are to humble ourselves for the sins of our courts. Isa. lix. 14-16; 2 Chron. xix. 10. It may be every one will not judge it an iniquity to fine the injury of twenty pounds, at two hundred; we read of restoration twofold, fourfold, sevenfold, but never one hundredfold. But is it not a wickedness to

suffer blasphemy to pass unpunished, and sodomitical rapes? What will become of rigour without mercy, is yet unknown.

Use 2. To teach men of place, first, Not to affect seats of justice; they will not secure them. Secondly, To prevent these errors: which is done by, 1. God's fear, 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7; 2. Not judging by the hearing of the ear, Isa. xi. 3, 4, unless both ears be open; 3. Rejection of gifts, Isa. xxxiii. 15.

Use 3. To refute the pope's infallibility of judgment: for he hath not such a promise of infallibility, as the king hath, Prov. xvi. 10.

Use 4. To moderate men's eagerness to suits at law.

Obj. Why, may I not sue for my right?

Ans. But can you tell that you shall attain your right by suit?

Use 5. To teach us private censurers may err much more, who have not received like promises.

Doct. 2. God will find a time to judge both the righteous and wicked, with every purpose (or will) and every work, ver. 17. Not only at the last judgment, Mat. xii. 36; 1 Cor. iv. 5; Eccles. xii. 14; but even in this life, Prov. xi. 31; Ps. ix. 4, 12, 16, vii. 11-16, and lxxvi. 9, 10; Exod. xxii. 22-24.

Reason 1. The glory of God, Ps. ix. 16, and i. 26.

Reason 2. The restraint and check of the rage and pride of men, Ps. ix. 20.

Reason 3. The groans, and sighs, and expectation of the poor afflicted, Ps. xii. 5, and ix. 18.

Use 1. To exhort to watchfulness in judgment-seats, and against all secret unrighteousness, Eccles. xii. 14.

Use 2. To exhort to quietness of spirit, when wrong judgment proceedeth, Eccles. v. 8.

Ver. 18. *I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.*

Ver. 19. *For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath: so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity.*

Ver. 20. *All go unto one place: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.*

Ver. 21. *Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth*

upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

Ver. 22. *Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?*

Solomon, having observed a vanity that befalleth the estates of men—first, By the overruling providence of God limiting all their changes, vers. 1-14; secondly, By the hand and government of courts of justice over other men, vers. 16, 17. Lest this should reflect any dishonour upon the providence of God, whereby he governeth all things in the world wisely, righteously, holily, he taketh up and giveth himself and others a twofold satisfaction in this point, from a twofold meditation: 1. From the order which God will take to redress all the iniquities of courts of justice, both in this and in another world, ver. 17. 2. From the end which God aimeth at in leaving of courts of justice to such iniquity, which is double: first, God doth it to try them; secondly, He doth it to let them see they are as beasts one to another, ver. 18. And to convince them the more of this latter, that men be but beasts, he argueth it not only from their usage of one another as beasts, but from sundry events common to them with beasts; that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth the beasts, to both alike. Which he argueth, first, for their bodies, in three particulars: 1. In the likeness of their deaths; as one dieth, so dieth the other. 2. In the likeness of their breath; they have all one breath, ver. 19. 3. In their burial and resolution of their bodies; all turn to the dust, as they came from it. Secondly, For the soul or spirit of man which goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward; this difference is not known or acknowledged, discerned or considered, by men generally—to wit, not by natural men at all, ver. 21. From whence he taketh this corollary, that seeing a man can take so little comfort or contentment in the estate or course of other men, therefore so to live as a man may rejoice in his own works, ver. 22: which he proveth, first, from the propriety he hath in that course—it is his portion; secondly, From the impossibility to know what shall be after him, ver. 22. or from his uncertainty of future events. To gather up all the points here delivered into a narrow room, all may be com-

prised in one note of doctrine; the reasons thereof, and the uses thereof also, let us handle them.

Doct. 1. He that shall ponder in his heart, and consider the estate of the sons of men, shall find that God would have men to say they are as beasts, vers. 18, 19. That which Solomon, upon serious pondering in his heart the estates of the sons of men, did resolve and say, that God doth this or that about them, that they might see themselves to be as beasts, the same another Christian, pondering the matter in his heart, may discern, resolve it, and say it, Ps. xlix. 12, 20, and lxxiii. 32; Prov. xxx. 2, 'More brutish than any man,' which implieth that, first, All men are brutish; secondly, He more than others. When God will clear it to Peter that he might converse with all sorts of men, he shews him in a vision that God would have him eat of all beasts, Acts x. 12, 13, 28.

Reason 1. From the violent and fraudulent and beastly oppression of men in authority over the poor people, Prov. xxviii. 15; Zeph. iii. 3; Luke xiii. 32; Ps. x. 9; Dan. vii. 4-7; Ezek. xxi. 31; Gen. x. 9; 1 Sam. xxvi. 20.

Reason 2. From the like occurrences or events befalling their outward man or body in their, first, Lives; both alike subject to hunger, cold, heats, labour, weariness, sickness, pains—yea, man's body more subject to these than the beast's. Secondly, Deaths; both mortal alike, whether, 1. By a natural death; 2. By a violent death, as hanging, drowning, stoning, burning, stabbing, &c.; 3. Burials, first, Both alike resolved to dust as they come from it, excepting some specially privileged, as Christ, Enoch, Elijah; secondly, Both subject to base contempt, Jer. xxii. 19.

Reason 3. From men's prostituting of their souls to like or worse conditions than that of the souls of beasts, who, of all the sons of men, in an estate of vanity, (or nature,) considereth or knoweth—that is, acknowledgeth—the difference of his soul which goeth upwards, from the soul of the beast which goeth downwards? For men cleave to earthly things to maintain this life, as do the beasts; both alike follow their sensual appetites. Immortal food and raiment of the soul is generally neglected. The immortal soul cannot feed upon bodily meats and drinks, nor be satisfied with silver or gold, but with

the favour of God, the blood of Christ, the gifts of the Spirit, the ordinances of God, communion of saints, &c., all which are neglected.

Use 1. To teach us to look at magistrates and courts of justice as set up of God for trial of men, as well as for other ends. To try, first, Magistrates themselves—*Magistratus indicat virum*. Place of government trieth the spirit of a man, whether it be just or corrupt, liberal or covetous, valiant or fearful, for God or for man. Secondly, Subjects, Prov. xxviii. 12—for *hidden*, read *tried* or *searched*, as Prov. xx. 27; Gen. xlv. 12. Subjects tried in their—1. Faith, Heb. xi. 36; 1 Pet. iv. 12. 2. Patience, Luke xxi. 19. 3. Obedience, Acts iv. 19. Let magistrates look at their places as furnaces to try them. Let people look at magistrates, especially unjust ones, as sent of God to try them.

Use 2. To teach all self-debasement. Magistrates, when they prove unjust, rule over the people as beasts, and all the people naturally live as beasts that perish, labouring for the meat that perisheth; and so for perishing raiment, honour, pleasure, and profit. Ever since we affected to become as gods, Gen. iii. 5, we fell to be like the beasts, whence God clothed our parents fallen with the skins of beasts, Gen. iii. 21. Yea, our bravest clothing is with webs of silk-worms, as, 1. Expressing whom we are like, Job xxv. 6; 2. Presaging what we shall one day be covered with, Job xvii. 14, and xxi. 26.

Use 3. To stir us up to consider better of our souls, and to make better provision for them, lest we live and die like beasts, Job vi. 27.

Use 4. To refute the popish opinion of *limbus patrum*, which they place in the earth beneath, *Bellar. de Purgat.*, lib. ii. cap. 6. But here we see the souls of men before Christ's resurrection went upward.

Use 5. To teach us so to live as we may rejoice in our works. There is little comfort in living like beasts that perish, but there is rejoicing in a Christian course, Isa. vi. 4, 5; 2 Cor. i. 12.

Motives. First, It is our portion, Eccles. iii. 22, as that which, 1. Maintaineth us with necessities, conveniences, and delights for the present, Prov. xvi. 8. 2. Maketh up all other losses and crosses, Acts xx. 23, 24; Ps. lxxiii. 26. 3. Maketh provision for another world, 1 Tim. vi. 17-19; Luke xvi. 9, and xii. 33.

Secondly, Uncertainty of future events. If we leave our good works to be done by our last wills and testaments, it is uncertain how they may be fulfilled.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1. *So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power: but they had no comforter.*

Ver. 2. *Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive.*

Ver. 3. *Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.*

In this chapter Solomon proceedeth to declare other vanities that befall the estates of the sons of men in this world, over and besides the vanity which befell them either by the just and wise government of God's providence, or by the unjust administration of men's government or judgment-seats. In the estates of men do arise the vanities here observed: first, From the neglect of compassion to men oppressed, ver. 1-3; secondly, From envy, ver. 4; thirdly, From idleness, ver. 5, 6; fourthly, From covetousness, ver. 7, 8; fifthly, From solitariness, ver. 9-12; sixthly, From wilfulness, ver. 13-16. Solomon, turning his mind from considering former vanities, and now considering oppressions, he fasteneth his thoughts chiefly upon the sad and pitiful estate of men oppressed.

This estate is set forth, first, By their adjunct, want of comfort or succour: 'And they had no comforter,' twice repeated. Secondly, By the contrary strength and store of power in their oppressors, so great that some translate that the oppressed had no power of escaping from it, and the words may bear both, ver. 1. Thirdly, By the effect which then it wrought in himself: to wit, to praise, 1. The dead above the living, ver. 2; 2. The unborn above the other, ver. 3.

Doct. 1. It is a vanity that befalleth the estates of men under the sun, that men of power abuse it to oppression; and a further vanity that men oppressed, though lamentably oppressed, yet have no

comforter; and yet a further vanity, that a wise man, even a godly wise man, considering this, is subject to wax weary of his life, Micah ii. ; ver. 1, 2; 1 Kings xxi. 7; Ps. lviii. 2; yea, Moses the meekest on earth, Num. xii. 3.

Reason of abusing the power: first, The power of corrupt nature, which will have a time to put forth itself to the utmost, Jer. iii. 5; secondly, Folly and arrogance joined with power, 1 Kings xii. 10, 11.

Reason of no comforter: first, Neglect of God's fear, Job vi. 14; secondly, Fear of men, 1 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12; thirdly, The strength of God's wrath, who, when he chasteneth, he will suffer none to help, Job ix. 13, and xxxiv. 29; Ps. lxxxviii. 18, with xxxviii. 11; fourthly, Contempt of men cast down, Job xii. 5; fifthly, Sensuality, Amos vi. 4-6; sixthly, Inhumanity, Luke x. 30-32; seventhly, Scruple of conscience, through difference of religion, John iv. 7, 9; Luke ix. 52, 53.

Reason of wise men's weariness of life to behold or feel this: first, Distemper of their minds, Eccles. vii. 7, through, 1. Judging of things according to sense, not according to faith; 2. Doubt of God's providence in temptation; 3. Impatience, Luke xxi. 19. Secondly, Depth and tenderness of compassion and zeal, which maketh them utterly unwilling to behold the violence of oppressors through zeal, Hab. i. 2, 12, 13, and tears of the oppressed through compassion, Hab. i. 3; Jer. ix. 1, 2.

Use of the abuse of power to oppression: first, To behold the vanity of all estates by the fall. Power, which was given to help the afflicted, is abused to crush them; thus greater men, as fishes, devour the less, Hab. i. 14. Secondly, To warn men of power to beware of the abuse.

Use of no comforter: 1. To teach all men oppressed to seek first to make their peace with God; for if he be angry, the strong helpers fail, Job ix. 13, and xxxiv. 29; secondly, To teach such as behold the tears of the afflicted, to cast out such corruptions and temptations as might hinder our compassion, as these before spoken of—neglect of God's fear, fear of men, contempt, sensuality, inhumanity, scruple of conscience, Heb. xiii. 3; Gal. vi. 10; Luke x. 33-37.

Quest. How may I know when God calleth me to succour and comfort a man afflicted or oppressed?

Ans. When three things concur: 1. His necessity, Job xxxi. 19, and xxix. 12, 17; 2. My ability, Prov. iii. 27, 28; 3. God offering opportunity, Luke x. 33; Gal. vi. 10.

Use of the wise man's weariness of life to behold this: first, To teach godly wise men to beware of a snare in the best virtues. It is a gracious and precious virtue, tenderness of compassion to men of misery; and yet the beholding of men in misery may breed in the wisest a discontentment and weariness of life. Secondly, To teach us in such a case rather to live by faith in suffering oppression ourselves, Heb. x. 34, or beholding the afflictions of others, Eccles. v. 8.

Use of all the three parts of the doctrine. If men of power be apt to abuse their power to oppression, and men oppressed do often find no comforter, and that a wise good man, considering this, be subject to wax weary of his life, then it may teach us to be compassionate and succourful to the oppressed. This may heal and prevent the two latter vanities, and remove the first, Job vi. 14, xix. 21, and xxix. 25; Luke x. 33; 1 Pet. iii. 8; Rom. xii. 15, Ps. lxxii. 4.

Motives. First, God's example, 2 Cor. vii. 6; Ps. cxlvi. 7, and cxlv. 8, 9; and his example is of necessary imitation in such cases, Mat. xviii. 33; Prov. xii. 10; Exod. xxiii. 5. Secondly, Danger upon neglect of it: 1. From God, Exod. xxii. 22-24; Lam. ii. 13; Amos vi. 6, 7; Ps. cix. 12; 2. From conscience, Gen. xlii. 21, 22, or else searedness or hardness contracted after softness by God's just judgment; 3. From man, 1 Sam. xii. 5, 6, 7; Ps. lxxii. 4. Thirdly, Community of condition, Heb. xiii. 3; Job iii. 13-15.

Application. 1. To the prisoner to help his conscience to sight and sense of his sins, and so to repentance.¹ His servant was diseased with the scurvy, which maketh the body weak and lifeless; and when nature is grown weak, the retentive faculty is weakened that he hath no hold of his excrements.

¹ It would appear that a sentence has been dropped from the text. The description is of severities inflicted on a slave by his master, who caused his death, and pleaded that he intended his reformation.—Ed.

In this case compassion would have looked out healing medicines, wholesome diet, warm keeping : what compassion was there in immoderate whipping? It is Egyptian cruelty, Exod. v. 7, 8, 14. 2. Striking on the head with a cudgel, leaving wounds and bruises. 3. Diet with the lights of a dead beast. 4. Washing his naked body in cold water, when ice and snow lay upon the ground, and putting on a cold and wet shirt, and kept out from fire. 5. Hanging him over the fire in the smoke. 6. Binding him on horseback, and he not being able to sit, fell on one side till blood issued at mouth, nose, and ears; denying him a draught of water; upon this he dieth.

Obj. But his intention was not to hurt him, at least mortally, but to reform him.

Ans. Sundry of these acts are not intended of God for reformation, as such diet, washing in cold water, wet apparel, and then kept from fire, hanging over the fire with smoke, bruises on the head. 2. Intention to destroy is no necessary ingredient to murder; as in case, first, Of knocking a servant when death followeth, Exod. xx. 20, 21. If one or two violent strokes of correction on which death followeth be capital, is it not alike capital to shorten life by many acts of rigour, hastening death by degrees? Secondly, Of killing a child in the womb, Exod. xxi. 22, 23. Thirdly, Of not keeping up a goring ox, Exod. 21, 29. Two things be requisite to make casual killing murder; viz., 1. To be conversant *in re illicita*, whence death followeth, as the Benjamites in defiling the Levite's concubine, Judges xix. 25, 26. 2. *In re licita non adhibere debita diligentiam ad evitandum mortale periculum*: as in these three cases. Hence, such as give *poculum amatorum*, whence death followeth, *summo supplicio afficiuntur*, Co., tom. i., part 1, col. 2, page 592. It is done, *licet non malo animo*, yet *malo exemplo*.

Obj. 2. Most of his hard usage was before his first coming to prison, after which he began to recover.

Ans. First, It argueth the prison was better to him than his master's house. In prison he mended and began to recover; in his master's house he relapsed and decayed. Secondly, His disease was never thoroughly cured, and therefore all his hard usage before and after imprisonment tended to increase his disease and hasten his death.

Ver. 4. *Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.*

Solomon having shewed the vanity that befalleth the estates of the sons of men by oppression, in ver. 1-3, he now in this verse speaketh of the vanity that befalleth them by reason of envy, ver. 4, and then proceedeth to speak of the vanity that befalleth a man from himself through, first, Idleness, ver. 5, 6; secondly, Covetousness, ver. 7, 8; thirdly, Solitariness, ver. 9-12; fourthly, Willfulness, ver. 13-16.

Doct. It is a vanity afflicting the spirits of men, that when a man's work is right, and he hath taken pains to do that which is good and right, yet for all this he shall be envied of his neighbours.

Reason of envy at good: first, Pride of heart and excessive self-love; for envy is the sadness of the heart for the good that we see in another, in regard so much glory (or praise) seemeth to be taken from us as is given to him. Eliab taxed that in David which was his own sin, 1 Sam. xvii. 28. Hence hatred of our brother, as wishing him deprived of the good he hath. Secondly, Profane and rebellious infidelity; for either we do not believe that our brother hath these gifts given him of God, (for if we did, it would mortify envy, John iii. 26, 27,) and this is profane infidelity; or else, if we believe they were given him of God, it is rebellious infidelity to grudge against God's goodness, Mat. xx. 15. Thirdly, Want of union with Christ, and communion with our brethren; for if we were united to Christ by faith, and one to another by brotherly love, the glory of Christ would be a comfort to us, by whomsoever advanced, Phil. i. 16-19; and if we were united in brotherly love one to another, the honour of one member would be the joy of another, 1 Cor. xii. 26. One finger envieth not another that weareth a gold ring, as taking it for an ornament of the whole hand—yea, of the whole body.

Reason why it is afflictive: first, To the envious person it rotteth and wasteth the vigour of body and spirit, Prov. xiv. 30. Secondly, To the person envied, 1. It is dangerous, threatening loss of life, as in Abel, Joseph, David, Daniel, Christ; it is murder, Prov. xxvii. 4. 2. It is uncomfortable and grievous to see a man's self so ill-beloved, that his good should be another man's harm.

Use. To reprove the envious person. See how many foul sins are wrapped up in his heart—sins against God, his neighbour, and himself. See the Reason.

It argueth weakness and baseness of spirit. *Quorum similitudinem desperant, eorum affectant similitatem, Apul. Flo., lib. i.* It is weakness of eyes to water and run at the sight of light. Yea, it is next step to the sin against the Holy Ghost. Both malign others for their goodness, only the one maligneth it as it is the grace of God, or glory of Christ; the other as it is a glory to a neighbour. Such as grieve at others' good would rejoice in their evil; love grieveth at the evil of another, but envy grieveth at the good of another.

Means against this sin: first, Faith to discern whence gifts spring, John iii. 27; secondly, Love to look at them as given to our use. What if all the town were good physicians, and I only had no skill that way? The more ready help it would be to me. What though Deborah did not kill Sisera, but Jael? yet Deborah rejoiceth in it heartily. Judges v. 24.

Use 2. To teach men in well-doing what to expect—not applause, not encouragement, but envy. And yet not thereby to be discouraged from well-doing; not to think it strange to find such unchristian entertainment, even amongst Christians.

Ver. 5. *The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh.*

Ver. 6. *Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.*

Solomon, having shewed the vanity that befalleth men through oppression and envy, he proceedeth to shew the vanity that befalleth the estate of men through idleness; where he describeth the idle person, first, By his adjunct of folly, *the fool*; secondly, By his cessation from action, and his composing himself to that cessation, *a fool foldeth his hands together*; thirdly, By the cause of that his cessation or restlessness, a deceitful imagination of the betterment of a handful, with ease and quietness, than of both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit, ver. 6.

Doct. 1. An idle person, by his forbearance of labour, maketh himself both a fool and a beggar; or a man that withholdeth himself from labour, doth both befool and undo himself. Folding of the hands

together is an act of an idle or slothful person, first, Withholding himself from labour; secondly, Composing himself to rest or sleep, Prov. xxiv. 30, 33, and vi. 10. It is all one whether he fold his fingers together, or fold his arms together; put his hands into his pocket or bosom, Prov. xix. 24. All alike express cessation from labour, with a mind to forbear it.

Reasons of befooling himself: first, It is folly to mistake names and natures of things, especially to delude ourselves with false names. To account and call that to be quietness which is idleness, slothfulness, sluggishness; to account diligent labour, travail, vexation of spirit. Secondly, It is folly to think a handful will be gotten with idleness, whereas nothing will be so gotten, Prov. xiii. 4, and xx. 4, and xxii. 21, and xxiv. 34. Thirdly, It is folly to think that a handful, gotten with ease and idleness, is better than both the handfuls with diligent labour, whereas a little gotten with labour is more precious and comfortable, Eccles. v. 12; Prov. xii. 27. Fourthly, It is folly, yea, a foolish tempting of God, to separate the end from the means; to expect maintenance without labour, Gen. iii. 17; Prov. x. 4. Fifthly, It is a like folly to separate the mean from the end, God having given hands to labour, mind and wit to employ in some honest calling, for private and public good ends, which to neglect is a slothful folly, Mat. xxv. 26. Sixthly, It is a folly for a man to prefer his wisdom and practice above others who excel him, ver. 6. This folly is very incident to idle persons, Prov. xxvi. 16.

Reasons of undoing himself: first, By wasting and neglecting the means of his subsistence, Prov. xviii. 9; Eccles. x. 18; Prov. xx. 4. No man's estate is infinite or bottomless, Prov. xxvii. 24-27. Secondly, By breeding diseases, wasting the body. Rest to the body is as rust to metal. 3. By corrupting the mind with wantonness, pride, folly, Ezek. xvi. 49. Standing pools gather mud and venomous vermin. 4. By wasting a man's kindred also, who are his own flesh.

Use 1. To wean us from idleness, as that which maketh us both fools and beggars. See all the particulars in the reasons.

It is a sin against the third commandment, as spending our time and talents in vain. Against the

fourth commandment, as not labouring six days, and so unfitting us for rest on the seventh. Against the fifth commandment, Prov. x. 5. Against the sixth commandment, in the text. Against the seventh commandment, Ezek. xvi. 49. Against the eighth commandment, Prov. x. 4, xix. 15, and xx. 4. Idleness is counted a gentleman's life, but it is a base and foolish condition.

Use 2. To observe the deceitfulness of sin, to cover and colour idleness with the name of quietness, but labour with the name of travail and vexation of spirit. Self-love maketh us apt to make a good construction of our own ways. The vicinity or nearness of virtue and vice maketh us apt to mistake and miscall one for another.

Use 3. To teach parents to train up their children in a way of diligence. If either parent be idle, children will follow the worse part. God gave Christ a calling to be king, priest, and prophet to his church. The angels have all a calling, Heb. i. 14; Adam in paradise, a gardener, Gen. ii. 15; Cain, a husbandman; Abel, a shepherd; Noah, a vine-dresser. Kings must be diligent and provident, Prov. xxvii. 23-27; queens, housewives, Prov. xxxi.

Use 4. To teach us to labour most in our chiefest work, 2 Pet. i. 10; Phil. ii. 12.

Ver. 7. Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.

Ver. 8. There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.

In the former verses next going before, Solomon observed the vanity that befalleth the estates of the sons of men through idleness. In these two verses he observeth as great a vanity that befalleth the sons of men through needless painfulness,—to wit, the painfulness that covetous men put themselves to without, 1. Cause; 2. End; 3. Satisfaction; 4. Recreation, or refreshing; 5. Consideration.

First, Without cause; he is a lone man, hath no second, no wife, child, nor brother. Secondly, Without end; no end of all his labour, no term of it. Thirdly, Without satisfaction; his eye is not satis-

fied with riches. Fourthly, Without refreshing; he bereaveth his soul of good. Fifthly, Without consideration; he considereth not, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? but not without vanity and sore travail and affliction.

Doct. It is a vanity and sore travail or affliction that a lone man should put himself to endless and restless labour for riches, and yet neither his eye satisfied with it, nor himself refreshed by it, nor he so much as to consider with himself for whose sake he taketh so much pains, and so little ease and comfort.

A lone man, one that hath no second,—that is, (1.) No wife; (2.) No child; (3.) No brother.

Yet there is no end of his labour. No end, no term or cessation; for $\Psi\Psi$ signifieth not an end of intention, but an end of cessation.

Neither is his eye satisfied with riches,—that is, his desire, covetous desire, which looketh out of the windows of his eyes, hence covetousness is called the lusts of the eyes, 1 John ii. 16; the eyes being that which, 1. Breedeth covetousness, John vii. 21; 2. Is only fed by it, Eccles. v. 11. He defraudeth, first, His body of wholesome diet, physic, recreation, sleep, Eccles. x. 12; secondly, His name of honour; thirdly, His soul of grace, Luke viii. 14.

1. *Reason*, why without cause. First, From the just hand of God upon a man that seeketh not, nor taketh the Lord for his God and sovereign good, that he shall make the creature, mammon, his god, and so seek it for himself; as a godly man labours hard to enjoy more of God, whether he have any children or brethren to leave him to or no, Mat. vi. 21. Secondly, From the ambitious end of some that, leaving a great estate behind them, it may be said they lived not like drones, or idle bees, or prodigals, or shallow shuttlescocks, but knew how to live and thrive in the world, Hab. ii. 5. He is a proud man, &c.

2. *Reason*, why without end. First, From want of satisfaction in riches, Eccles. v. 10. Secondly, From want of attaining a man's proper place when he hath attained never so great wealth. A stone resteth and ceaseth to move when it is fallen to the earth, which is its proper place. But a covetous man ceaseth not his labour, because his wealth is not his proper place.

3. *Reason*, why without satisfaction. First, From the insufficiency, 1. Of bodily things to satisfy a spirit; 2. Of temporal and transitory things to satisfy an eternal and immortal soul. Secondly, From the unnaturalness of this lust. It is a disease like the dropsy, which is increased by drinking; yea, it is a lust set on fire from hell, Hab. ii. 5.

4. *Reason*, why without refreshing. First, From the curse upon creature comforts, Gen. iii. 17. Thorns and thistles is their fruit, they pierce the heart through, 1 Tim. vi. 10.

5. *Reason*, why without satisfaction. First, From the nature of sensual and earthly things—they stupefy the heart; hence they are said to choke, Mat. xiii. 22. Secondly, From the curse of God upon idolatry; idols, and they that worship them, are alike senseless, Ps. cxv. 8; Isa. xlv. 18–20.

Use 1. To observe, that sometimes men of great estates, and great dexterity and industry to get great estates, may yet want children and kindred to leave it to, as Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 11; and Abraham, long, Gen. xv. 2, with xvii. 17. As on the contrary some men have wives and store of children, and poor kindred to leave it to, and yet want estate to leave them. Thus, first, There lieth a vanity upon all men's estates. The poor eateth his bread with sorrow, because he hath so little for so great a household; the rich, because he hath not whom to leave it to. Secondly, God bestoweth his gifts severally; to some children and kindred, but no riches—to others riches, but no children or kindred. Which, first, Sheweth the emptiness of riches, that can get neither children on earth, nor father in heaven; secondly, Calleth upon others for more thankfulness, who have both wealth and children.

Use 2. To teach such as have children to be more diligent in their calling, and to be more provident in their expenses; for Solomon counteth it a vanity and sore travail, for men that want children to take such pains; not for them that have many, 2 Cor. xii. 14; 1 Tim. v. 8. It is engrafted in nature, the old to provide for the young; the want whereof God accounteth want of understanding in the ostrich, and cruelty, Job xxxix. 14–17.

Use 3. To teach the wife her due place. She is a second, not a first; she is not above her husband,

for he is her head, Eph. v. 23, nor beneath children or brethren.

Use 4. To dissuade from covetousness. It tireth out body and mind with restless labour and care. It yieldeth neither satisfaction nor refreshing. It stupefieth and besotteth the heart.

Use 5. For a sign of covetousness. It setteth a man upon more labour than cause; we rather covet wealth, than consider what to do with it. We bereave ourselves of many useful comforts.

Use 6. To labour for such wealth as will satisfy, and which will not bereave the soul of good, but feed and refresh it with the chief good, Isa. lv. 2, 3.

Ver. 9. *Two are better than one; because they have a good reward of their labour.*

Ver. 10. *For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him.*

Ver. 11. *Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?*

Ver. 12. *And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

Upon occasion of speech of the vanity that befalleth the lonesome estate of men by covetousness, he declareth another vanity that befalleth a lonesome estate of men, though covetousness be wanting, through unprofitableness and helplessness; and therefore preferreth the society of two, and much more of three, before lonesomeness, and that in all the affairs which are incident to human life. Which are all of them either, first, Voluntary, of which kind he putteth in, as in the rest, one example for many: as labour; two have a better reward for their labour, ver. 9. Secondly, Casual; if the one fall, the other shall help up his fellow; which he amplifieth by the woe or misery that may befall a lonesome man in such case for want of help, ver. 10. Thirdly, Natural; if two lie together, then they have heat; amplified by denial of warmth to one alone, ver. 11. Fourthly, Violent; if one prevail against him, two shall withstand; which he amplifieth by a proverbial *epiphonema*, 'A threefold cord is not easily broken,' ver. 12.

Dock. Society in all sorts of human affairs is better than solitariness.

Some conceive this place spoken in praise of marriage, and preferment of it above single life; but though that have a place here, marriage being one kind of society, yet is not marriage only here meant. Yea, the proverb of a threefold cord doth not so fitly agree to that: polygamy is not preferred before digamy, I mean before the marriage of two, one man with one woman.

First, In voluntary affairs, God would have two workmen chief about the ark—1. Bezabiel; 2. Aholiab, Exod. xxxi. 2, 6. The Egyptians in Pierius's hieroglyphics expressed the unprofitableness of a solitary man by one millstone, which alone grindeth no meal, but with his fellow is most serviceable to prepare meal, and so bread for man. In the body all instruments of action are made by pairs, as hands, feet, eyes, ears, legs, thighs, &c., though but one head. It is because a man hath liberty to consult with many heads in any business of importance; yea, if the business be urgent, and require haste, yet he hath another, his wife in his own family. In spiritual things, Christ sent forth his disciples two by two, Luke x. 1. Paul and Barnabas sent out together by the Holy Ghost, Acts xiii. 2; and when they fell out, Paul took Silas, and Barnabas took Mark, Acts xv. 39, 40. Hence a pastor and a teacher appointed to assist one another for one congregation, Rom. xii. 7, 8. In all duties, two or three have a special assistance, Mat. xviii. 20.

Secondly, In casual events. Though a man may travel often, and find no harm, meet with no fall, or having fallen, may help himself, yet sometimes a dangerous fall happeneth in which society helpeth and saveth, Luke x. 30, which is most apparent in spiritual falls, 2 Sam. xii. 1-13; 2 Chron. xix. 2. In these falls which are bodily, men sooner feel their falls, and the danger of them; but in spiritual falls sin is of a venomous nature, and like some poisons blindeth the eyes, and stupefieth the feeling; so that here a faithful Christian helper is a special mercy.

Thirdly, In natural dispositions and works. If one lie alone in old and cold age, or in cold weather, he is without heat, 1 Kings i. 1, 2. Brands of fire laid together keep heat; one alone, though never so well kindled, goeth out. In spiritual matters much more. Compare 2 Cor. i. 12, 13, with Acts xviii. 5. See all 2 Chron. xxiv. 2, 17, 18, and xxvi. 5, 16.

Fourthly, In violent assaults one much helpeth his fellow, 2 Sam. x. 9-12. In spiritual assaults it is the like case. Eve alone yielded to the tempter, who, if she had kept with her husband, and consulted with him, might have resisted the temptation, and kept her innocency.

Reason 1. From the Lord's appointment of mankind to live in societies, first, Of family, Gen. ii. 18, Ps. lxxviii. 6; secondly, Church, Eph. ii. 19, 22; thirdly, Commonwealth, Eph. ii. 12.

Reason 2. From the variety of gifts given to the sons of men; and to none all, that one may stand in need of another, and make use of one another, 1 Cor. xii. 8-11. Yea, it is so in civil gifts; no man is skilled in all occupations.

Reason 3. From the subordination of some gifts to others, as the bricklayer to the mason, the maker of mortar to both; whence these together much further one another's business, and so make better riddance of work, and get a better reward.

Use 1. To refute the popish anchorites and hermits, who think solitary life a state of perfection; but Solomon judgeth it a woeful estate.

Use 2. To refute such as love to be alone in all their counsels and proceedings, and are not willing to communicate with others. Thus pride of heart maketh a man of a savage nature. Wild beasts love to go alone, but tame by flocks and herds. And to teach men to affect society in all their affairs. Solomon, though full of wisdom, yet had a college of wise counsellors, 1 Kings xii. 6.

Use 3. To persuade also seasonably to marriage; yea, as preferring it before single life, Gen. ii. 18. Adam had no need of a wife as a remedy against incontinency, yet married.

Use 4. To teach men in societies to do one another the more good, else Solomon's discourse falleth. Now-a-days company doth one another much hurt.

Ver. 13. *Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and a foolish king, who will no more be admonished.*

Ver. 14. *For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor.*

Ver. 15. *I considered all the living which walk*

under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.

Ver. 16. *There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.*

In these words, Solomon declareth the vanity and vexation of spirit that befalleth upon kings and princes, and so upon royal estates; and that from a double ground or cause: first, From the folly and wilfulness of kings, ver. 13, 14; secondly, Through the levity and inconstancy of the people, ver. 15, 16. The folly and wilfulness of kings he argueth from the meanness and baseness of that estate; and that he aggravateth by an argument *a majori*, of a far better estate of a wise child, though poor, above a foolish king, though old, and so for age venerable; preferring the low estate of the one, above the highest estate of the other, ver. 13. And this he proveth by the effects of both their estates: for the poor wise child out of prison cometh to reign; the other, born and waxen old in his kingdom, becometh poor, ver. 14. In declaring the levity and inconstancy of the people, he noteth it as a vanity found in the people of all the nations under the sun: first, That there is no end, or stay, or rest of the people's affections to their princes and governors; secondly, That the people will wax weary of the young prince that shall come after the old king, after they have tried his government, ver. 16. And both these he proveth by his own observation of all the people living in all nations under the sun, and comparing the people's dealing with the second child that shall stand up in the old king's stead, ver. 15.

Doct. There is a vanity and vexation of spirit that befalleth the estate of kings and princes, partly through their own folly and wilfulness, partly through the levity and inconstancy of the people.

Reasons of their vanity through their own folly and wilfulness: first, From the preferment of a wise child in his worst estate above such a prince in his best estate. Childhood is despicable in any, Eccles. xi. 10; 1 Tim. iv. 12, much more in poverty, Eccles. ix. 16. Old age is honourable in any, Lev. ix. 32, much more in princes. Yet when a king, though old, is foolish and wilful, a poor wise child is better than he; yea, though the child were a captive, a

prisoner. For such a poor child or youth may, out of prison, come to reign, as Joseph, Gen. xli. 14, 40; David, 1 Sam. xviii. 23; Daniel, chap. vi. 3. Whereas an old king may by folly and wilfulness become poor, as Pharaoh, Exod. x. 7; Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15; Jehoram, 2 Kings vi. 25, and vii. 13; Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 33; Manasseh, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jecooniah, Zedekiah, all of them prisoners, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, and xxxvi. 4, and 2 Kings xxiii. 33, xxiv. 15, and xxv. 7. The occasion whereof is, 1. God's delight to honour the humble, and crush the proud, 1 Pet. v. 5; Job xl. 11, 12. 2. Pride is the root of wilfulness.

Reason of their vanity, through the levity of the people. From their aptness to wax weary of any prince or governor, 1 Sam. viii. 7; 2 Sam. xv. 12, 13; 1 Kings i. 11; and this springeth from want of attainment of their ends in their magistrates. 'There is no end of all the people,' ver. 16. Everything resteth in the attainment of his end. The end of magistracy is set down, 1 Tim. ii. 2; this the people not attending, nor attaining, they cannot rest. Hence they are compared to waves of the sea, never still—sometimes full sea, sometimes low water, Ps. lxxv. 7; Rev. xvii. 15; Isa. lvii. 20.

Use 1. To teach us that royal state is no sanctuary nor preservative from folly and wilfulness. Not only wicked kings, but all have had their pangs and strains of folly: David's numbering the people, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10; adultery and murder; Solomon's love of strange wives, and toleration, yea, continuance of idolatry; Asa, his league with Benhadad, imprisonment of the prophets, and trust in physicians; Jehoshaphat, his affinity with Ahab and league with idolaters; Hezekiah, shewing his treasures to the ambassadors of Babel; Josiah, his war against Pharaoh-Necho. Yea, wilfulness found not only in Pharaoh, Exod. v. 1, 2; in Saul, 1 Sam. xx. 30–33; in Jeroboam, 1 Kings 13, 33; in Jehu, 2 Kings x. 29, 31; but sometimes in good kings: in David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1–4; in Asa, 1 Chron. xvi. 9, 10.

Causes hereof: first, God's hand, Ps. cvii. 40. Secondly, Satan, 1 Chron. xxi. 1. Thirdly, Great places breed great spirits; whence pride springeth, that leaveneth and hardeneth the whole lump, Jer. xxii. 21. Fourthly, Old age is froward and stiff. Fifthly, Flatterers about princes lead them into ill

ways for their own ends, and stiffen them in them, Hos. vii. 3, 5; Amos vii. 10-13; 1 Kings xii. 10, 11.

A warning, first, To princes, to pray for a wise and learning heart. 1 Kings iii. 9; secondly, To people, to strive with God for their princes, Ps. lxxii. 1, 2.

Use 2. To refuse admonition is a great folly, even in a prince, even in an old prince, 1 Kings xii. 6, 7, 13; 2 Chron. xvi. 9, 10. More hope of a fool than of such, Prov. xxvi. 12, and xii. 1. It bringeth the commonwealth into a snare, Prov. xxix. 8. How much more foolish is this wilfulness either in meaner or younger people.

Use 3. To teach us the excellency of wisdom, which youth, yea, childhood and poverty, cannot debase, but it will arise to preferment: and the baseness of folly and stubbornness, which nobility and age cannot honour.

Use 4. To teach parents to train up their children to wisdom, and therefore to learning and godliness; and withal to break them of their wilfulness, that so they may be fit for preferment in the eyes of God and men.

Use 5. To reprove the inconstancy of people, and the cause thereof, their neglect of the right end of magistracy, 1 Tim. ii. 2.

Use 6. To wean great men from popularity: the people's favour is unstable, Job v. 35; Mat. xxi. 8, 9, with xxvii. 22, 23.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1. Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.

Ver. 2. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

Ver. 3. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business, and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

In this chapter Solomon declareth the vanity found, first, In the performance of God's worship, ver. 5-7; secondly, In marvelling and murmuring at oppressions in men of place, ver. 8; thirdly, In

riches, ver. 9-19; in declaring the vanity found, not in God's worship, but in men's manner of performance of it, lest he might seem with the profane, Mal. iii. 14, to esteem it a vain thing to serve God, he rather directeth men how to prevent such vanities, than declareth the vanities which they fall into in God's worship. His direction in these three verses is, first, In general; to take heed or look well to our ways, when we enter into holy public assemblies, ver. 5. Secondly, In particular; to draw nigh to hear. Whereof he giveth a reason, from the folly of all sacrifices without drawing near to hear, ver. 5; which is amplified by the reason thereof, taken from the evil of such a worship, and their ignorance of that evil who do so perform it, ver. 5, 2. To avoid hastiness and multitude of words before God. Whereof he giveth a twofold reason: first, From God's heavenly majesty, in comparison of earthly baseness, ver. 2; secondly, From the folly springing from multitude of words, amplified by the comparison of a dream coming from multitude of business, ver. 3. The words may fitly be opened, in opening the doctrine which ariseth from them.

Doct. When we come into the presence of God in holy assemblies, it is for us to take heed to our ways, that we may draw nigh to hear, and be serious and short in speech before the Lord.

To take heed to our feet is, by a metonymy, to take heed to our ways, as Ps. cxix. 115, and xxxix. 1. Which implieth, first, Cleansing of our feet (that is, our steps) before holy duties, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2; Ps. xxvi. 6, 12; John xiii. 10; James iv. 8. Secondly, Attention to the performance of holy duties in a holy manner, Exod. iii. 5; Joshua v. 15; Lev. x. 3.

Be more ready to hear, is better translated, 'Draw nigh to hear, rather than offer,' &c. Which drawing nigh to hear implieth, first, Putting away all such things as set God far off from us, James iv. 8; Ps. cxxxviii. 6; Isa. lix. 2. Secondly, Sincere desire and purpose of heart to attend and obey the whole counsel of God, Acts x. 33; else we are far off, Mat. xv. 7, 8; Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Thirdly, Mingling it with faith, that is, with faithful application to ourselves, Rom. x. 8; Heb. iv. 2.

Reason 1. From the folly of all sacrifices (of all other parts of God's worship) if attention to the word be neglected, text; Prov. xxviii. 9. It is an

evil before God, and evacuate the acceptance of all our oblations, 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23. And it is also mixed with vacuity and ignorance, to think we are well occupied, and spend our time well, when indeed we lose our labour, yea, return worse than we came.

Reason of serious and short speech : 1. From God's heavenly majesty in comparison of our earthly baseness, ver. 2 ; Prov. x. 19 ; Mat. vi. 7. His heavenly majesty, first, Knoweth all our wants when we pray, Mat. vi. 32 ; secondly, Is a spirit that is not moved with words, but spirit and life, John iv. 23, 24 ; thirdly, His own words, when he speaketh to us, are spirit and life, John vi. 63. And therefore we must not beat the air in hasty and much speech.

Reason 2. From the vanity and folly of long discourses, whether in prayer or preaching, ver. 3, 7 ; Prov. x. 19. As a dream cometh by much business, so a fool's voice by multitude of words, ver. 3, where blot out in the translation, *is known*.

Use 1. To teach us how we are to esteem holy assemblies. They are the house of God ; in old time, so was the tabernacle and temple, 1 Kings ix. 1 ; Ps. cxxxii. 5, lxxiv. 8, and lxxiii. 12. Which were types, first, Of Christ's body, John ii. 21 ; secondly, Of the church assembly, 1 Cor. iii. 16. Now, therefore, church assemblies are the Lord's house, 1 Tim. iii. 15. Not our meeting-houses, but God's people in them, Acts vii. 48, 49 ; John iv. 21 ; 1 Tim. ii. 8.

Use 2. To reprove falling down to private prayer, either, first, In meeting-houses behind a pillar, in the absence of the people ; secondly, In the presence of the people, but not joining with them. All public duties should be performed, first, With one accord, Acts i. 14, ii. 46, and iv. 24 ; secondly, To public edification, 1 Cor. xiv. 26. Also to reprove Latin service, and instruction by images, which are to be seen, not heard ; likewise to reprove standing far off when we may come within hearing ; also careless and listless carriage in the congregation, standing like pillars, driving away the time with sleeping, talking, gazing about ; likewise running out of doors before all be ended. Moreover, lowness of voice in ministers, which hindereth hearing.

Use 3. To teach us such preparation before hearing, and attention in hearing, as may be acceptable to God and profitable to ourselves.

Use 4. To teach ministers, in prayer and preach-

ing, both weight of matter and shortness of words, Prov. x. 19, 20, and xxix. 20.

Obj. But was not Christ long in prayer—a whole night ? Luke vi. 12 ; and Paul in preaching ? Acts xx. 7, 9.

Ans. First, Upon extraordinary occasions ; second, With as much variety of matter and fervency of spirit as multitude of words.

Ver. 4. *When thou vowest a vow to God, defer not to pay it ; for he hath no pleasure in fools : pay that which thou hast vowed.*

Ver. 5. *Better it is that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.*

Ver. 6. *Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error : wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands ?*

Ver. 7. *For in the multitude of dreams and many words, there are also divers vanities : but fear thou God.*

In the three former verses Solomon instructed us to avoid in God's worship the irreverent neglect of attention in hearing, and rashness in speaking before God. In these verses he instructeth against the vanity in the delay or neglect of payment of vows : 'When thou hast vowed a vow, defer not to pay it,' whereof he giveth six reasons :—

Reason 1. From the folly—yea, hateful folly, folly hateful to God—to delay payment of vows, ver. 4.

Reason 2. *A majori*, from the betterment of not vowing, above not paying, ver. 5.

Reason 3. From the defilement of the whole man by the rashness of the mouth in vowing, which a man should not suffer : 'Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin,' ver. 6.

Reason 4. From the inexcusableness of such a sin, from its not falling under that kind of sins for which sacrifices are wont to be offered : 'Neither say thou before the angel that it was an error.'

Reason 5. From God's anger and vengeance against such vows and such excuses, even to the destroying of the works of a man's hand, ver. 6.

Reason 6. From the vanity of such rash vows and speeches—yea, the variety of vanity in them, answerable to what is found in many dreams, ver. 7.

Against all which he prescribeth an antidote or preservation—to wit, the fear of God: ‘But fear thou God,’ ver. 7.

Doct. 1. When a man hath vowed a vow to God, he is to pay it, and that without delay, Deut. xxiii. 21-23; Ps. lxxvi. 11, and lvi. 12, ‘Thy vows are upon me;’ as an engagement or debt, which a faithful man would be careful to discharge to men, much more to God, Ps. l. 14; Nahum i. 15. For opening the point, it is to be shewn, 1. What a vow is; 2. What is a seasonable time of vowing, and whether now at all, in the days of the New Testament; 3. The reasons against delay of payment of vows.

1. What a vow is. A lawful vow, it is a promise made to God, wherein a man bindeth his soul to perform some acceptable work to God. First, A promise made to God, wherein it differeth from a prayer. In a prayer, we require something which God hath promised to us; in a vow, we promise something to God. Hence in the text the vow is said to be vowed to God, ver. 4 and 2. Secondly, A man bindeth his soul to God in them. Num. xxx. 4. Thirdly, To perform some acceptable thing to God. Unlawful things we may not vow, as the Jews did. Acts xxiii. 12, 13: nor impossible, nor unsuitable to our calling. But two sorts of things are acceptable matters of vows: first, Religious obedience to God in his commandments, Ps. cxix. 109; Gen. xxviii. 20, 21; secondly, Helps to obedience, and removal of impediments. Payment of tithes was a help to worship, and to the maintenance of it, in those days when God accepted such a maintenance for his priests, Neh. ix. 38, with x. 29, 32; Gen. xxviii. 22. So contributions, Acts iv. 37; so the vow of a Nazarite, 1 Sam. i. 11; Job xxxi. 1, was a removal of an impediment, 2 Cor. xi. 10, a prevention of dishonour to Paul’s ministry.

2. A seasonable time of vowing is, first, When we stand in need of some special favour from God; then, as we desire God might draw more nigh to us in special mercy, so it is meet we should draw more nigh to God in special duty, Gen. xxviii. 20-22; Num. xxi. 1-3. Secondly, When we have received some special mercy, Ps. cxvi. 8, 9, and lxxix. 11; Jonah i. 16. Thirdly, When we find our hearts ready to betray us to this or that evil by

occasion, we may vow against such occasions, and vow also the contrary duties, Job xxxi. 1; 2 Cor. xi. 10; which argueth vows are not unseasonable in the days of the gospel. Fourthly, When we are to enter into some new relation whereof God is the author, and the duties of the relation depend upon our vows or covenants with God, and with one another. Thus in marriage, Prov. ii. 17; Mal. ii. 14; and in church covenant, 2 Cor. viii. 5, and xi. 2.

Reason 1. From the folly, yea, hateful folly, folly hateful to God, to delay payment of vows, ver. 4.

Reason 2. From the preferment of not vowing before not paying vows, ver. 5.

Reason 3. From the charge lying upon us to keep our mouths, and the evil of sin redounding to our whole man by rash vowing, ver. 6, as who should say, We have sins enough, and frailties whereto we are subject otherwise; we had not need rashly to rush into more by such inconsideration.

Reason 4. From the vanity of the excuse of such a sin before the angel, as an error of ignorance; where by *angel* is meant the priest or messenger of the Lord, as Mal. ii. 7, before whom the excuser of his rash vow would come and offer sacrifice for his ignorance or error, Lev. iv. 27, 28: the same word here and there and oft in that chapter, as ver. 2, 13, 22, 27.

Reason 5. From the wrath and vengeance of God against such vows and such excuses. God will be angry at thy voice, and destroy the works of thy hands. Thus God was angry with Jacob for delay, Gen. xxxiv. 30, with xxxv. 1; thus he destroyed Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 2-5.

Reason 6. From the variety of vanities in such vows and delays, as in dreams—to wit, in both, first, Idleness and unprofitableness; secondly, Confusion; thirdly, Troublesomeness; fourthly, Contradictions; fifthly, Absurdities; sixthly, Falsehoods.

Use 1. To refute popish vows, as to saints, without a pattern in Scripture. See *Bell. lib. de cultu Sanctorum*, c. 9. The like evil is in vows of poverty, perpetual single life, and regular obedience; they are like the idolatrous praying priests, 2 Kings xxiii. 5; for incense was a type of prayer, Ps. xiv. 12. Vows to the devil, as in witchcraft; vows of all unlawful things; for all such vows, men that make them are to be humbled for them, and to break them, lest we draw in God to bind us to sin.

Use 2. To exhort to careful payment of our vows in baptism, in church covenant, in marriage, in our prayers (wherein we usually promise to God) duly, Ps. cxix. 32-34.

Use 3. To exhort to the fear of God, as that which preventeth all these vanities, ver. 7, which befall men in God's worship. This fear of God will help us, first, To vow in sense of our own insufficiency, either (1.) To make vows; (2.) To pay vows. Secondly, To depend on Christ for both.

Ver. 8. *If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.*

As in the former verses Solomon sought to prevent the vanities that are wont to be found in men's performance of God's service, so in this versè he seeks to prevent the vanity of discontentment or discouragement that is wont to arise in men's hearts from the oppressions of the poor, and the violent wrestings of justice and judgment.

The evil here noted is, oppression of the poor and the wresting of judgment and justice.

The remedy he prescribeth against the vanity that might arise in men upon beholding of it is, not to wonder.

The reason of not wondering is from the regard which the most high God, and others higher than magistrates, have of this matter: 'For he that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than these.'

Doct. The beholding of the oppression of the poor in a country, and of the wresting of justice and judgment, should not put a man to wonder, Rev. xvii. 6, 7; 1 Pet. iv. 12.

Obj. The prophets of God, inspired by the Holy Ghost, have wondered at it, Isa. i. 21; yea, the Lord himself, Isa. lix. 14-16.

Ans. Wondering may arise from a fourfold cause. First, Ignorance of the cause, John vii. 15; secondly, Crossness to causes, or expectation from them, Isa. v. 4, 7, and lix. 16; thirdly, Strangeness or newness, Luke v. 26; Mark i. 27; fourthly, Astonishment or uncertainty what to do, Jer. iv. 9; Zech. xii. 4; Deut. xxviii. 28. The second sort of wondering is only incident to God, and that only; the

other three are commonly found amongst men, and are wont to breed in them both discontent and discouragement.

Reason 1. From the Lord's ordering it, so implied in the word *שמר*, *keepeth*. When he keepeth, no hurt done but as he directeth, Isa. xxvii. 3; Prov. xxix. 26; Lev. xxvii. 14-17; Isa. ix. 5; Ps. cix. 6.

Reason 2. From God's sovereignty over such as do oppress the poor and wrest judgment; and he will require and requite it, Ps. xii. 5; Lam. iii. 36; Job xxxiv. 18-20, 26-28; Eccles. iii. 16, 17.

Reason 3. From the pre-eminence and presidency of angels over high princes, Dan. iv. 17; 2 Kings xix. 35; Mat. xviii. 10.

Use 1. For instruction to people not to wonder at oppressions, or wrestings of justice or judgment, so as to break forth either into discontent or discouragement, Ps. xxxvii. 1, 2, 7, 8. But, instead of wondering, first inquire the truth of it, whether it be so or no, Gen. xviii. 20, 21; Joshua xxii. 16, &c., with 30, &c. Secondly, If true—1. See God's hand in all, Lam. iii. 38; Prov. xxix. 26. 2. Seek to reprove, Jer. xxii. 17, and reform, 1 Sam. xiv. 45, according to our places. 3. Either remove timely, Ps. lv. 6-11, or patiently wait upon God, Ps. xxxvii. 3-7, and suffer from man.

Use 2. To warn magistrates and great men to take heed to their ways. The Lord observeth, regardeth, requiteth, 2 Chron. xix. 6.

Use 3. For comfort to the poor oppressed. Though no man regard the poor and their just cause, yet God and his angels do.

Ver. 9. *Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field.*

Ver. 10. *He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.*

Ver. 11. *When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of men with their eyes?*

Ver. 12. *The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.*

Ver. 13. *There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.*

Ver. 14. *But those riches perish by evil travail : and he beggetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand.*

Ver. 15. *As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.*

Ver. 16. *And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind ?*

Ver. 17. *All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.*

In these words the Holy Ghost setteth forth the vanity of covetousness, or the love of money, by sundry arguments. First, From the unsatiableness of it, ver. 10, amplified by the contrary sufficing and satisfying profit which the earth or field yieldeth to all sorts, even to kings, ver. 9. Secondly, From the diversion, or turning aside, of the profit of wealth to others, and reserving no more benefit to the owners than the bare sight thereof, ver. 11. Thirdly, From the distress and unquietness which abundance—1. Of meats and drinks ; 2. Of cares—yieldeth to the owner by the excess, amplified by the contrary sweet and quiet sleep and rest of the labouring servant, ver. 12. Fourthly, From the hurt redounding to the owners by wealth, ver. 13. Fifthly, From the perishing of riches by evil travail, ver. 14. Sixthly, From the penury his seed may fall into, ver. 14. Seventhly, From the necessity of leaving all behind him in death, ver. 15, 16. Eighthly, From the many crosses and vexations which befall a man in his lifetime from his wealth, ver. 17.

Doct. The earth yieldeth sufficient profit unto all sorts of men, from the king to the meanest servant, but not to covetousness, 1 Chron. xxvii. 26-31 ; Prov. xxvii. 23-27, and xxxi. 16 ; 2 Chron. xxvi. 10 ; Amos ii. 1. It is bread that strengthens man's heart above all other meats, Isa. iii. 1 ; it is the staff, Ps. civ. 15 ; Gen. xliii. 8. It is scarcity of bread that maketh a famine, not other commodities. And even the beasts and flocks are maintained by the earth.

Reason of the earth's yielding profit sufficient : first, God provideth it, as meet that that which bred us should feed us ; secondly, That labour might be encouraged, and not lost, Gen. iii. 19 ; thirdly, To beat into us a sense of our mortality. As the earth bred us, so it feedeth us till we return to it.

Not so covetousness, or the love of money, or of wealth.

Reason 1. From the unsatiableness of covetousness, ver. 10. It is a great vanity when we covet a creature which cannot satisfy us when we have it. Hunger is satisfied with meat, thirst with drink ; but hunger and thirst after wealth is not satisfied with wealth. The love of meat and drink will make a man willing to use and spend them, but the love of money and silver will not suffer a man to spend them. A poor man's poor estate may be relieved by one wealthy man's beneficence, but the hunger of the covetous cannot be satisfied with a hundred men's estates ; a sign his heart and mind is unmeasurably poor and miserable. A man that is still hungry when he hath eaten enough, (as in the *βουλημία*,) or is still thirsty when he hath drunk enough, (as in the dropsy,) physicians say, *Opus habet purgatione, non impletione* ; so is it with the covetous man. Though the covetous man may say and think he layeth up for his heirs, yet he would not have his heirs to spend it, but, like conduit-pipes, to convey it from one to another.

Reason 2. From the unprofitableness of abundance ; it increaseth not our comforts, but expenses, 1 Kings iv. 22, 23. Servants must be multiplied suitably, 1. To our business ; 2. To our rank. The eye is only fed with it, but neither that to satisfaction.

Reason 3. From the disrest and disquietness which abundance yieldeth by excess, 1. Of meats and drinks ; 2. Cares and want of sleep, ver. 12 : which cometh to pass, first, By filling the stomach, and so straitening the lungs that they cannot breathe freely ; secondly, By sending up store of fumes and vapours into the brain, which fill it with excrements, and emptieth itself in rheums and plegmas, which, by spitting, coughing, and dreams, interrupt sleep ; thirdly, By stupefying the animal spirits, which should recreate and refresh the brain ; fourthly, By heating the brain in the night with study and cares. But labour breedeth sweet sleep : 1. When he eateth little his senses close for want of spirits to quicken and open them ; 2. When a man eateth much, first, By exciting natural heat by labour ; secondly, By washing superfluous humours, and so keeping the stomach and brain clean.

Reason 4. From the hurt redounding to the owners

by wealth, ver. 13: hurt, 1. To the body, 1 Kings xxi. 6-8; 2. To the soul, first, Leading it into many temptations, 1 Tim. vi. 9; Ps. lxi. 22; secondly, Choking good seed, Mat. xii. 22; thirdly, Hardening men's hearts in evil of impenitency, Rom. ii. 4, 5.

Reason 5. From the perishing of riches by evil travail, ver. 14: either, first, Of a man's self, as by an ill haunt to hawks, hounds, whores, or suretyship, buildings, gaming, costly apparel; secondly, Of his household, children, servants, wasting and consuming their estate; thirdly, Of his enemies, Job i. 14-17.

Reason 6. From the penury incident to rich men's children, nothing in his hand: 1. No wealth; 2. No labour. First, Neither wit; secondly, Nor skill; thirdly, Nor strength to it.

Reason 7. From the necessity of leaving all behind a man at death, ver. 15, 16; Job i. 21; 1 Tim. vi. 7. Only laden they are with more sin, else stripped of all outward things: first, Honours, Ps. xlix. 17; secondly, Profits, Luke xii. 20; thirdly, Pleasures, Heb. xi. 25. We come into the world crying, we go out mourning and groaning. Hence all labour for wealth is for wind: first, We cannot hold and keep it; secondly, It swelleth us like empty bladders.

Reason 8. From the much anguish and sorrow and vexation which wealth causeth, through, first, Losses and crosses; secondly, Fears of after evils; thirdly, Darkness through want of spiritual light.

Use 1. To encourage to husbandry, and feeding of cattle, and all labour about the earth; it breedeth sufficient profit. The earth is a cistern to the sea also.

Use 2. To teach kings not to destroy the fruits of the earth. They undo themselves.

Use 3. To acknowledge the bounty of God in providing so fruitful a nurse for us, Acts xiv. 16, 17.

Use 4. To dissuade from covetousness, which is when we love riches, first, For themselves, not for their use; secondly, Are not satisfied with them; thirdly, Are not content with what the earth may produce for diet, clothing, and lodging.

Use 5. To teach a painful poor man thankfulness.

Use 6. To teach all men, even rich men, moderation of diet, and diligence of labour, Prov. xxxi. 13, 19, 27.

Use 7. To teach wealthy men to beware of ill haunts, Prov. vi. 26, xxi. 17, and xxiii. 21; but rather to employ their estates in some profitable matter; they will else come to an ill end.

Use 8. To teach parents to leave their children, first, A good covenant; secondly, Custom to labour. Any other wealth may come short to them.

Ver. 18. *Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion.*

Ver. 19. *Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.*

Ver. 20. *For he shall not much remember the days of his life: because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.*

Solomon, having shewed in the former verses the abuse of wealth by covetousness, in these words he sheweth a contrary good use of wealth: first, In good men, ver. 18; secondly, In all men, ver. 19. In good men he saith it is comely and beautiful to eat, drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour all the days of his life, which God giveth him, ver. 18.

Reason hereof he giveth, first, From the condition of his estate, and of this use of it, it is his portion, ver. 18; secondly, From the quiet passing away of his time without sad remembrances of it, for he shall not much remember the days of his life; the reason whereof he giveth from God's answering his heart in comfort, ver. 20. In all men to whom God hath given wealth, it is a gift of God, 1. To have power to eat of it; 2. To take his portion; 3. To rejoice in his labour, ver. 19.

Doct. To eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of a man's labour, it is comely in a good man, and it is the gift of God in any man, Eccles. ii. 26, iii. 12, 13, and ii. 24.

Reasons to confirm it. 1. From Solomon's experience: 'Behold I have seen it, or found it,' ver. 18.

Reason 2. From the evil disease and vanity that lieth upon a man, when he is denied the power to make use of it, Eccles. vi. 2.

Reason 3. From the condition of men's estates in this world. It is their portion, ver. 18, both to good men, ver. 18, and to evil men, Ps. xvii. 14. As a portion, 1. It furnisheth us with necessities, expences, delights; 2. It maketh up crosses and

losses; 3. It maketh provision for after times, yea, for another world, 1 Tim. vi. 17-19.

Use 4. It is the fruit, or end, or good of his labour, ver. 18.

Use 5. From the shortness of the days of a man's life, ver. 18. He that reserveth the use of all till old age, may die before he come to use it at all, or else be then unable to use it, 2 Sam. xix. 35.

Reason 6. From the joy and comfort wherein God answereth a good man's heart in enjoying the good of his labour, ver. 20. Now, to enjoy the good of it, implieth, first, The reaping of the fat and sweet of it ourselves; secondly, To impart the good of it unto others also, Eccles. iii. 12, 13; Isa. lxiv. 5.

Reason 7. From the little thought or remembrance which such a good man takes how his time spendeth, ver. 20. For he doth not much remember the days of his life, which is an effect of the former joy; which is as oil to the wheels, and so makes our time to pass easily. All the days of the afflicted are evil, Prov. xv. 15, and he takes sad thoughts and remembrance of the revolution of times, Job vii. 3, 4. If an evil man take as little thought and remembrance of his time, it is not comely for him; it becometh him not, Job xxi. 13.

Use 1. To teach good men, yea, to encourage them, to enjoy the good of their estates. It is comely for them, Ps. xxxiii. 1; not so for a wicked man, Prov. xxvi. 1, and xix. 10. All the former reasons of the doctrine are as motives to the use.

Use 2. To teach all men, that any good which they enjoy from the creature is the gift of God; and therefore they to look to God, to enjoy the giver as well as his gift.

Use 3. To teach men to give themselves to labour, else how shall they enjoy the good of their labour?

Use 4. To teach us to number our life by days, ver. 18; Gen. xlvii. 9.

Use 5. To reckon our life, and all the days of them, as God's gift, ver. 18; Lam. iii. 22.

Use 6. To teach us the way to pass away our days comfortably. It is to be good, and to enjoy the good of our labours, receiving the good of our labours, doing good to others. In this way God answereth in joy our hearts, and we pass away our times without sad remembrances, ver. 20.

CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1. *There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men :*

Ver. 2. *A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.*

In this chapter Solomon declareth the vanity, first, Of human society, or prosperity in outward things, ver. 1, 2; secondly, Of long life and store of children, ver. 3-6; thirdly, Of labour, ver. 7, 8, &c. In these two verses Solomon setteth forth the vanity of such outward good things wherewith men are most taken—to wit, riches, wealth, honour; and these amplified, 1. By their abundance even unto satiety, so that a man wanteth nothing of all that he desireth; 2. By the evil God inflicteth upon it: God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it; 3. By the adjuncts of this estate, fourfold: first, It is an evil; secondly, It is common amongst men under the sun, ver. 1; thirdly, It is a vanity; fourthly, It is an evil disease, ver. 2. Riches, wealth, and honour are expressed by God himself in the same terms, 2 Chron. i. 11. Riches differ from wealth; riches expressing revenues of the field, or cattle, which are tithable; for it is a word in the Hebrew which differeth in a prick only from tenths or tithes. Wealth, in the original, is such treasure of silver, gold, jewels, and household stuff which are not tithable. God giveth him not power to eat thereof, a metaphor and a synecdoche in eating, put for enjoying the sweetness of them; one kind of enjoying put for all. For honour cannot properly be eaten, but the sweet of them may be enjoyed.

Doct. 1. It is a vanity and an evil, even an evil disease, an evil disease common amongst men everywhere, that a man receiveth from God riches and honour of all sorts, even to the satisfaction of his soul, and yet God giveth him not power to enjoy the good of it, but leaveth it to a stranger.

Reason 1. From the unlawful getting of riches or honour by oppression, deceit, ambition, or the like, Prov. xxviii. 8, and xiii. 22; Job. xxvii. 13, 16, 17.

Reason 2. From the satisfaction of their hearts in

it; which acquiescency in the creature is an idolatry which the Lord will curse, Luke xii. 19, 20.

Reason 3. From want of prayer to God, for a comfortable use of the blessings we do enjoy, James iv. 3.

Reason 4. From the abuse of the creatures upon our lusts, James iv. 3; Job xx. 22.

God taketh away from a man the power to enjoy the sweet and good of it many ways: as, first, By sickness of body, Job xxi. 25; secondly, By scruple of conscience, as Acts x. 13, 14; thirdly, By inordinate affection to some trifle, for want of which all is less comfortable, Esther v. 11–13; fourthly, By covetousness, Eccles. iv. 8; fifthly, By some stain of folly in a great person, which blasteth all his honour, Eccles. x. 1.

Use 1. To teach us that all riches, wealth, and honour, and all the enjoyments of that good and sweet thereof, are from the Lord, 1 Chron. xxix. 12.

Use 2. To ask of him therefore what we want, either of these things or of the good of them.

Use 3. To remove these evils out of God's sight, for which he is wont to deny men the good of the gifts we do enjoy.

Use 4. To bless the Lord, who giveth us any good things, and power to enjoy the good and sweet of them.

Ver. 3. *If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he.*

Ver. 4. *For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness.*

Ver. 5. *Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known anything: this hath more rest than the other.*

Ver. 6. *Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?*

In these verses Solomon declareth the vanity of two other earthly comforts: 1. Store of children; 2. Long life, which may be accompanied and clogged with great vanity, in case two other benefits be wanting: first, The soul to enjoy good; secondly, The body to enjoy burial; which misery and vanity

he setteth forth by a comparison with an abortive, *a pari et a minore*, equal in five respects: 1. Of coming into the world with vanity, ver. 4. 2. Of seeing no good, ver. 6. 3. Of departing in darkness and obscurity, ver. 4. 4. Of oblivion of both, ver. 4. 5. Of going both to one place, ver. 6. The vanity of the abortive. Less in respect, first, He hath not seen the sun; secondly, He hath not known anything to grieve him; thirdly, He hath more rest than the other, ver. 5.

Doct. 1. An old father of many children and many years, if his soul want goodness and his body burial, an abortive, or untimely birth, is as good, yea, better than he. As good in respect, 1. Of their entrance into the world; they both came in with vanity, that is, to no end. Not simply and altogether, for God hath wise and good ends of sending them both into the world, but in regard of themselves and other men. 2. Of their seeing no good in lifetime, ver. 6. 3. Of their departure out of the world; they both depart in darkness: first, Of obscurity; secondly, Of misery. 4. They both are covered with darkness of oblivion, yea, sometime the name of the wicked shall rot when the other is not blemished, Prov. x. 7. 5. Of the same place whereto they both go—to the earth from whence they came, and the wicked man to a worse place, Acts i. 25. The abortive better in respect, first, He never saw the sun, so he never saw outward good things, which might trouble him to lose; secondly, He never knew anything good or evil, so that his reckoning is more easy and his present grief less; thirdly, He enjoyeth more rest from evils both in this and in the other world, ver. 5.

Reason 1. From the overpoising vanity of those two wants—first, Of burial; secondly, Of soul's want of goodness—to extinguish the comforts of, 1. Store of children; 2. Long life. Want of burial, first, Leaveth the body as dung to rot and stink upon the face of the earth, a thing, 1. Dishonourable to the dead; 2. Loathsome to the living, Ps. lxxxiii. 10; 2 Kings ix. 37, 38; Jer. xxi. 18, 19. Secondly, Leaveth the body without pledge of resurrection; the body buried is corn sown, 1 Cor. xv. 36. The soul's want of goodness, 1. Is as a dead carcase stinking above ground, Ps. xiv. 3. 2. Leaveth it to more putrefaction by longer lying above ground,

yea, the more inexcusable in impenitency. Rev. ii. 21. 3. Procureth a greater damnation for living so long with so many children, and for want of goodness doth neither good to himself nor them.

Use 1. To take off men from blessing themselves in store of children and long life. Rehoboam had store of children—sons, twenty-eight; daughters, sixty—yet his soul empty of goodness, 2 Chron. xi. 21, with xii. 14. Ahab had seventy sons, 2 Kings x. 1, yet they all died a violent death, ver. 6, 7; and their father's blood dogs did eat, 1 Kings xxii. 38. And though his carcase found burial, yet not so Jezebel's, 2 Kings ix. 34-37.

Use 2. To moderate the grief of such as want children or have abortives, so their souls want not goodness, nor their bodies burial, they are better than these in the text.

Use 3. To look at abortion as a vanity and misery to the creature, and so at want of burial. It is a stoical apathy to despise want of burial. *Facilis jac-tura sepulchri: Cælo tegitur, qui non habet urnam.* Solomon's porch and Venus' porch are not of equal dimensions. And if abortion be a vanity and misery, then avoid such sins as make us like them: as, first, Malignancy against God's people, joined with incorrigibleness, Ps. lviii. 8; secondly, Harsh and unreverent insurrection against well-deserving magistrates, Num. xii. 1, 2, 12.

Use 4. To exhort to furnish the soul with goodness, which will make a blessing of life, long or short, children many or few, burial or no burial, Isa. lxxv. 20; Ps. lxxix. 2. A woman fearing God is better than a woman bearing the best child, Luke xi. 27, 28.

Ver. 7. *All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.*

Ver. 8. *For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?*

Ver. 9. *Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit.*

In these verses Solomon discovereth to us the vanity of labour, which he setteth forth by four arguments. First, From the wearisomeness of it, implied in the word עָבַל, which is *labour—cum defatigatione et molestia*. Secondly, From the end of

it, for the mouth. Thirdly, From the emptiness or defect of it, in that the soul is not satisfied by it, ver. 7; which is amplified by a distribution of the subject-person so labouring, whether he be wise or foolish, the one hath no more by his labour than the other. Yea, the poor, who is more laborious and industrious than other men; yea, the discreet and prudent poor, who knoweth how to converse and carry himself amongst men, he hath no more by his labour but to fill his mouth, yet not to fill his desire or soul, ver. 8. Fourthly, From the wandering of the desire, (which springeth from the soul's not being filled.) This is amplified by an argument *a majori*, that it is better to enjoy the sight of the eyes—that is, to enjoy and to be content with the present estate—than to be carried on with such a walking soul or wandering desire. In regard of all which evils he counteth labour itself, with these concomitants, to be vanity and vexation of spirit, ver. 9.

Doct. All the labour that the sons of men take in the estate of corrupt nature is a grievous or vexatious vanity, Gen. iii. 17, 19. And though, by Christ and his grace, the bitterness and sting of that vanity is removed, (the curse being taken away, Gal. iii. 13.) yet the cross still remaineth; hence Jacob's description of his life in all the years of it, and in all the days of those years, Gen. xlvii. 9, 10; Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 27.

Reason 1. From the wearisomeness of the labour, amplified in the word עָבַל, which is translated *wearisomeness*, Job vii. 3—to wit, 1. Fainting the body; 2. Afflicting the mind with care and grief.

Reason 2. From the end of it; it is for the mouth. The husbandman labours in the earth, the mariner in the sea, the shepherd in the field, the carpenter in the wood, the tradesman in his shop, the scholar in his book; as they are natural men, they all labour for the mouth, Prov. xvi. 26.

Obj. How can this stand, seeing much labour is for the back, for apparel, or for lodging? Mat. vi. 25.

Ans. First, The mouth may be put for the whole body, as sometimes bread is put for all maintenance, as well of back as belly, Gen. iii. 19; Mat. vi. 11.

Secondly, It is true in proper speech, taking the mouth for the chief and supreme end of labour, to which all the rest must give place in case of necessity. A man will sell his lodging and clothing.

and all he hath, for his mouth. Gen. xlvii. 15-19; and it is a great vanity that the divine spirit of a man should labour only for sensual things and transitory.

Reason 3. From the emptiness of the soul or appetite after all this labour. The mouth is a narrow portal, not above two or three inches square, and the stomach not above a hand-breadth square—the whole man not above five feet long; and yet, when a man hath laboured to fill all these, and provided him of store for many years, yet his mind is not satisfied, but his inordinate desire after the means of his maintenance, like a dropsy-thirst, is never filled. And thus fareth it with the learned scholar, the rich churl, the industrious and prudent poor man. These vanities fall alike to them all; how much less is the immortal soul filled!

Reason 4. From the wanderingness of the unsatisfied desire, which, like the bee, runneth from flower to flower, and sucketh honey and wax till it be laden, and yet still laboureth for more, till sometimes it be stocken in its hive through abundance of honey.

Better is the sight of the eyes, that is, better is what you see before you, be it less or more, than the wandering of the desire: as the good householder saith to his guest, Much good may it do to you what you see before you.

Use 1. To remind us of the greatness of our fall in Adam, whence so much bitterness in labour and sin, for a little sweetness of the fruit of a tree, and that upon us and on all our posterity.

Use 2. To beware of such sinful labours as increase these wearisome vanities. If honest labour be so grievous and vain, how much more sinful labours! Take heed of labour to undermine and supplant well-deserving men, Prov. iv. 16; Ps. vii. 14. Darius was better employed, Dan. vi. 14; 1 Thes. iv. 11.

Use 3. To teach us to labour for that bread which perisheth not, but feedeth and satisfieth the soul to eternity, John vi. 26, 27; Rev. ii. 3; Rom. xvi. 12; Phil. iv. 3; 1 Cor. xv. 10, 58.

Use 4. To teach the poor that discretion in him is observed by God and wisest princes, when he knoweth how to walk before the living.

Use 5. To wean us from wandering desires, and to learn us satisfaction and contentment in our

present estate, that is, with what we see before us, Phil. iv. 11; 1 Tim. vi. 6.

Use 6. To raise up the country unto thankfulness to God, that supplieth us comfortably with that which men most labour for. We need not sell our clothes for bread.

Ver. 10. *That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.*

Ver. 11. *Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better?*

Ver. 12. *For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?*

That which, it is quicquid fuerit, as Junius; or as Broughton, *quisquis fuerit*; or as the words and sense fitly run, *whatsoever he*, that is, *any one is, quicquid quis fuerit*, it was named already (or formerly of old) and it is known to be Adam, &c.

Solomon summeth up the vanity of man, whosoever or whatsoever he be; he sheweth what his estate is, first, By creation: 1. He is Adam, a piece of red earth, base and of the earth, argued by his notation; 2. Impotent to his Maker; he cannot contend with him that is mightier than he, ver. 10. Secondly, By his present condition after the fall: 1. All the accessions that come upon him, learning or knowledge, honour, wealth, pleasure, long life, store of children, labour, they all increase his vanity. What is he the better, to wit, for them all? ver. 11. 2. He is ignorant, first, Of what is good for him in this life, which is amplified by the simile of a shadow; secondly, Of future things: who shall tell him what shall be after him? ver. 12.

Doct. Whatsoever the man be, it is well known, as his name is, so is he; Adam, a lump of clay; and whatsoever befalleth him in this life, in his natural estate, he is never the better for it, Gen. i. 26, 27, and ii. 7; Eccles. xii. 7. Clay, and so, 1. Subject to the hand of the potter, of necessity, Jer. xviii. 6; 2. Base, Ps. xlix. 2, and lxii. 9; 3. Brittle, first, In soul mutable, Job iv. 18, 19; secondly, In body easily subject to mortality, of itself, Job iv. 19. That that which befalleth him in this life, maketh

him not the better, is argued from the vanity of all. Eccles. i. 2.

Reason 1. From his utter insufficiency and inability to contend with his Maker, ver. 10. An earthen pot cannot contend with a rock. Mat. xxi. 44; Isa. xlv. 9; Rom. ix. 20, 21; Job ix. 3, 4; where be two reasons of it: the first, From God's wisdom; the second, From his power.

Reason 2. From the increase of vanity upon man by all the accessions of this life, by gifts, 1. Of the mind, Isa. xlvii. 10; Jude 4; 2. Of the body, Ezek. xvi. 15; implied, 3. Of outward estate, Jer. xxii. 21; Rev. iii. 17; Prov. i. 32; Ezek. xxviii. 4; 2 Chron. xxvi. 16; which springeth, first, From our corrupt nature, which, as a fusty vessel, corrupteth all that is put into it; secondly, From the curse of God upon the creatures by the fall, Gen. iii. 17.

Reason 3. From the ignorance and unskilfulness of men, 1. To discern what is good for them in this momentary life, Job xi. 12. We look at those things which are best for us, which are temporary, bodily, and present; whereas our souls find no good in such—as a dropsy-man chooseth drink, which is most hurtful for him. We know not how to make a good use of them so far as they might lead us, Deut. xxix. 4. 2. To foresee or discern future things, Eccles. viii. 7.

Use 1. To humble the pride of man. Earthly man, whatsoever he be, he is known of old to be *Adam*; and that which more humbleth him is, that he is not the better for all that befallerth him in this life, nor doth he know what is good for him in this life, nor how to make use of it.

Use 2. To teach men not to contend with their Maker. It is hard to dash earthen pitchers against stone walls. Therefore to forbear pleadings and murmuring—1. Against God's purpose, Rom. ix. 20, 21; 2. Against his providence, Jer. xii. 1—we must submit patiently under God's hands, Ps. xxxix. 9; we must obediently follow his calling, Rev. xiv. 4.

Use 3. To shew us our life as in a glass. It is as a shadow—to wit, 1. Without substance—rather a death than a life, 1 Tim. v. 6; 2. Seeming greater when life is most remote; 3. Easily or speedily passing away, and that when it is at greatest.

Use 4. For thankfulness to God, that Christ

would take such a base estate upon him as the estate of earthly man. That so many sons of Adam meet together, yet some good agreement; else, were it not for God's special guidance and blessing, vanity put to vanity would but increase vanity. Ps. xxxix. 5, with lxii. 9. The Netherlanders' motto a wholesome advertisement, resembling themselves to a company of earthen pitchers floating in the sea, with this word, *Si collidimur frangimur*.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1. *A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.*

Solomon having spoken of the vanity of sundry conditions of the creature, considered in themselves, in this he speaketh of their vanity compared one with another, wherein also he intimateth the vanity of men's judgments and imagination touching these things, as esteeming the better to be worse, and the worse to be better. In this verse he declareth two things to be better than other two, which are commonly reputed to be worse—as, first, A good name to be better than a good ointment; secondly, The day of death to be better than the birthday.

The words themselves are a proverbial doctrine: 'A good name is better than a good ointment;' yet an ointment is reckoned amongst precious riches and treasures, Isa. xxxix. 2; but a good name is preferred before it, Prov. xxii. 1.

A good ointment, first, Is fragrant, John xii. 3; secondly, Shining, and making the face to shine, Ps. civ. 15; thirdly, Sinketh into the bones, and suppleth and softeneth the dried sinews and muscles, that it maketh a man more fit for race, for wrestling, or any other bodily exercise, Ps. cix. 18; fourthly, Is healing, Luke x. 34; fifthly, Preserveth even after death by embalming, Luke xxiii. 56.

In all these properties, qualities, and effects, a good name excelletth a good ointment, which may be as so many reasons of the point. A good name, first, Is more fragrant, the one filling the house, John xii. 3, the other town and country, John iii. 26; Rom. i. 8. Secondly, Putteth a shining lustre upon the countenance, Eccles. viii. 1. Wisdom, which

is a matter of reputation, Eccles. x. 1. maketh the face to shine, &c. Thirdly, It sinketh into the bones, Prov. xv. 30; yea, it fitteth to any public employment, in ministry, 1 Tim. iii. 7, or magistracy, Deut. i. 13. Fourthly, Healeth the venom of slanders and backbitings. Fifthly, Keepeth us alive after death, Prov. x. 7.

Obj. How can the ninth commandment be preferred before the eighth?

Ans. A good name is the honour of a man's person, and so belongeth to the fifth commandment.

Use 1. To reprove the vanity and folly of such, who, to get wealth and treasure, care not how they prostitute their good name. It was a sordid speech of Vespasian, *Dulcis odor lucri ex re qualibet.*

Use 2. To reprove the blemishing and blasting of any man's good name, which duly belongeth to him. It is a greater sin than to steal the best goods he hath, Prov. xxii. 1. A tradesman's credit is oft more worth than his estate.

Use 3. To exhort to a conscionable care of getting and keeping a good name. It is not ambition nor vainglory when a man seeketh it by good means for good ends, and affecteth it no further, nor accepteth it, but as is due to him. Means of a good name: 1. Faith, Heb. xi. 2; 2. Fruits of faith, first, Sanctifying of God's name, 1 Sam. ii. 30; secondly, Sparing the names of our brethren, Mat. vii. 1, 2; thirdly, Humility, Prov. xxii. 4; Luke xiv. 11; fourthly, Worthy acts for public service, 1 Sam. xviii. 7; Mat. xxvi. 13; 2 Chron. xxiv. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 16. Hence sweet odours at funerals, as a monument of a sweet smelling report, 2 Chron. xvi. 14. On the contrary, sin staineth a good name, Prov. x. 7; 1 Kings xv. 30; Mat. x. 4; Gen. xi. 4, 9. Ab-salom's pillar, 2 Sam. xviii. 18, was *Columna calumnie*; or as Lot's wife's pillar of salt, seasoning others, but shaming ourselves. It is not fair faces, buildings, clothes, or estates that can procure or preserve a good name.

Obj. 1. Christ excelled in all virtues and duties, yet he lay under an ill name, as a glutton and wine-bibber, a deceiver, an enemy to Cæsar.

Ans. He bore our sins, and so our reproaches, as a punishment due to our sins. 2. It was amongst evil men, as his profession was also evil spoken of amongst them, Acts xxviii. 22. 3. At length he

overwrested it, and got a great name, Phil. ii. 9.

Obj. 2. But it is a curse to a minister to be generally well spoken of, Luke vi. 22, 26. John Baptist is said to have a devil, Mat. xi. 18.

Ans. First, Ministers that are faithful have special cause to provoke wicked men, where their name chiefly suffereth, 1 Kings xxii. 8, and xviii. 17, else wisdom is justified of her children, Mat. xi. 19; secondly, Ministers at length overwrestle it, Mat. xxiii. 29, 30.

Obj. 3. But even private Christians, as truly godly, are traduced.

Ans. First, Sometime they neglect their life of faith, 2 Sam. xii. 12, 13; secondly, God prevents sin in them by false reports; thirdly, It is but at the hands of wicked men, Acts xxviii. 22, and xxiv. 25; fourthly, If it be at the hands of brethren, it is through their ignorance, emulation, and rashness, which God at length will overwrestle, Job xlii. 7. Otherwise God hideth the names of his children in the secret of his tabernacle from the strife of tongues, Ps. xxxi. 20. The words are a proverbial doctrine.

Doct. 2. The day of death is better than the birthday. This is not the speech, first, Of Job in misery, Job iii. 3; secondly, Nor of Jeremiah in passion, Jer. xx. 14; but of Solomon in his repentance. This Solomon speaketh not only of some extraordinary kinds of death which have been of more public service—as the death of Christ, John xii. 32; of Samson, Judges xvi. 30; of the martyrs, whose blood is, first, The glory of God, John xxi. 19; secondly, The seed of the Church—but indefinitely and generally of the death of all or any. Better to the godly, in regard, first, Of sin, which shall then be wholly subdued, Rom. vi. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 26. If sin continued after death, death were not the last enemy. But in birth we are born in sin, Ps. li. 5; children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. Yea, new birth leaveth much corruption still in us; we are born in sin, but we die in the Lord, Rev. xiv. 13; 1 Thes. iv. 14. Secondly, Of misery, which attendeth birth, Job xiv. 1, and v. 7. But death is a haven of rest after a sea of troublesome agitation and misery, Job iii. 13, 14, 21, 22; Rev. xiv. 13. Thirdly, Of grace, which will then be perfected, Heb. xii. 23; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; Jude 24; Eph. v. 27. Death is accounted an enemy to nature, but

is a friend to grace ; we are born unclean, Job xxv. 4 ; John iii. 6, but we die perfect. Fourthly, Of glory. Birth is the seed-time of corruption, Gal. vi. 8 ; death is the seed-time of incorruption and glory, 1 Cor. xv. 36, 42-44. Birth putteth us into the hands of midwives and other weak women ; death into the hands of the glorious and mighty angels, Luke xvi. 22. Birth bringeth us forth into a valley of tears ; death into our Master's joy, Mat. xxv. 21. Birth into an estate of absence from the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 6 ; death bringeth us into his presence, 1 Thes. iv. 17 ; 1 John iii. 2. Birth bringeth us to labour, Job. v. 7 ; death to rest, Rev. xiv. 13, even Sabbath rest. Birth bringeth us into a larger and fairer world than our mother's womb ; but death into a larger and fairer than this. The starry roof of this world is but the pavement of that. Better to the wicked, in regard, first, Of others, Prov. xi. 10 ; secondly, Of themselves, though it had been good for them not be born, Mat. xxvi. 24 ; yet being born, the sooner dead, 1. The less sin ; 2. The less punishment.

Quest. May the wicked then do well to hasten their own deaths ?

Ans. By no means ; for self-murder is worse than murder of another. And besides, so the wicked cutteth himself off from means and hopes of conversion.

Use 1. Against purgatory to the godly after death. For then death setteth them into a worse condition than ever their birth did ; for the pains of purgatory, as papists describe them, differ not from the pains of hell in measure of torment, but duration only. And what use can there be of purgatory, when no sin is left in death to be purged after ?

Use 2. To exhort to such a life as may make our death comfortable. Means : first, Regeneration, new birth, John xi. 26 ; Phil. i. 21 ; secondly, Faithful and fruitful course of life, 2 Tim. iv. 6-8.

Use 3. To comfort the godly against death, by consideration of all the former benefits of death. Samson's riddle is now Solomon's paradox ; out of the eater, death, which devoureth all, cometh meat and sweetness.

Obj. 1. But in death I lose all my dear friends.

Ans. First, If thou hast lived any long time,

most of thy dearest friends are gone before thee ; secondly, Thou shalt change these here for better friends there ; our best friends love us not so dearly as every one there ; thirdly, Thy good friends will not be long after thee.

Obj. 2. But what shall I do with my poor children, and young ?

Ans. Leave them with God, Jer. xlix. 11.

Obj. 3. But there is bitterness and pangs in death.

Ans. First, So there is in birth ; secondly, After-comforts swallow up all griefs, John xvi. 21.

Use 4. To moderate the mourning of the living for their dying friends. You rejoiced in their worse day, their birthday, why not much more in their better day ? 2 Sam. xii. 19, 20. Pharaoh and Herod solemnised their birthdays, Gen. xl. 20 ; Mark vi. 21 ; why should not Christians rejoice in the departure of their Christian friends ? The days of the martyrs' execution were called *Natalitia*. It is true, we may mourn for loss of public good instruments to family, church, and commonwealth, and judge ourselves for such sins as provoke the Lord to remove them ; but yet it is best for them that they are gone, and best for the church what God doth. The death of Joseph and Josiah turned to the best good of Israel ; the bondage of Egypt wrought for Israel a more glorious deliverance ; and the captivity of Babylon, which brake in upon the death of Josiah, instead of a dungeon, proved a wine-cellar, Cant. ii. 4.

Ver. 2. *It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting : for that is the end of all men ; and the living will lay it to his heart.*

As in the former verse Solomon preferred two things that seem less desirable, above other two that seem more desirable—a good name above a good ointment, and the day of death above the birthday ; so here he preferreth a third thing, that may seem less desirable, before another, which to men doth commonly seem to be much more desirable. The house of feasting is commonly preferred amongst men, as more desirable to be gone unto, above the house of mourning ; but here the day of mourning, even the greatest mourning, mourning for the dead, is preferred before the house of feasting. Better it is, saith he, to go to the house of mourning

than to the house of feasting; whereof he giveth two reasons: first, From the property of the house of mourning, to wit, for the dead. It is the end of all men. Secondly, From the good use which the living will seriously make of this house of mourning, and of the cause of mourning which he there be-holdeth—the death of some friend or neighbour. The living will lay it to his heart.

Doct. 1. It is better, or a more desirable good thing, to go to a house of mourning for the dead, than to a house of feasting for the solace of the living. Of feasts there be three sorts: 1. Civil feasts, where a fourfold solace—first, Eating the fat and drinking the sweet; secondly, Loving and neighbourly company; thirdly, Pleasant discourse, and sometimes music; fourthly, Increase of mutual neighbourly love. 2. Profane or riotous, where the former comforts are abused and perverted. first, By excess in eating and drinking to gluttony and drunkenness; secondly, The company swag-gering and debauched ruffians, swearing and roaring boys; thirdly, Instead of pleasant discourses, ribaldry, wanton songs and dances, abusing of the name of God or man; fourthly, Fallings out and quarrel-lings, or else linking in conspiracy to do some mischief. 3. Holy feasts, where, first, God's insti-tution or special mercies invite to thankfulness, and to eat and drink as before God, Exod. xviii. 12; secondly, Christian company; thirdly, Holy con-ference, Luke xiv. 1–8, and so to the end; fourthly, Increase of childlike love to God, and brotherly love one to another. Of this last sort of feasts, the comparison is not put; for God's ordinances are more edifying than his providences. Nor is it to civil, especially to godly men; but of the second sort of feasts, riotous. For to honest and good men, it is a house of mourning to be in such a house of feasting, Ps. exx. 5. But here he speaketh of such a house of feasting as is contrary to the house of mourning.

Reason 1. From the nature of the occasion of that mourning, it being the death of some or other de-sirable person in the family—that death is the end of all men. If the person dead were not desirable, there is little or no mourning for him, 2 Chron. xxi. 19, 20. But if there be mourning, all useful men will see their own ends in his, which is very whole-

some to our spirits, Deut. xxxii. 29; Lam. i. 9. In feasting, men are apt to put the evil day far from them, Isa. lvi. 12; Amos vi. 3–6.

Secondly, In the house of mourning we shall be occasioned to take to heart what we see; yea, to lay it as a plaster to our heart, (text.) Not so readily in a house of feasting.

Obj. But doth not the house of feasting offer to our hearts many serious and savoury meditations? Doth it not set before us, first, A spectacle of God's bounty, leading to thankfulness, Ps. cxlv. 16, and repentance, Rom. ii. 4; secondly, The variety of God's goodness dispersed in the several creatures, Acts xiv. 17; thirdly, The wisdom of God's provi-dence, preparing and gathering the meat and com-pany from sundry quarters of the world, Ps. cxlv. 15; fourthly, The large extent of Christian liberty purchased by the blood of Christ, 1 Cor. x. 27; fifthly, The fatness and sweetness of spiritual and heavenly food, *a minori*, Luke xiv. 15; sixthly, A spur to enlargement of fruitfulness after a feast; we expect our horses after well meating should travel better.

Ans. It is true, a feast setteth before us many spiritual advantages; but yet, first, A man's spirit disposed to cheerfulness is more exposed to light-ness; secondly, Sad objects make deeper impression upon our affections; thirdly, The company at a funeral are not so apt to draw our minds away by cheerful discourse, as at a feast.

Use 1. To reprove funeral feasts; for it maketh the house of mourning and feasting all one.

Use 2. To teach us the estate of our nature. God seeth it better for us to meet with sad and mournful occurrences than cheerful.

Use 3. To teach us so to lay to heart the death of others, that it may be better to us than the best meal's meat, better than a feast. If thou art a living man, lay sad objects to heart, especially this of death. More distinctly lay to heart, first, Death itself; secondly, The causes of it; thirdly, The effects of it; fourthly, The manner of it; fifthly, The subject of it.

In death itself see a spectacle of thine own mor-tality, Joshua xxiii. 14; 1 Kings ii. 2; wait there-fore for a change, Job xiv. 14.

In the causes of it. First, Moral or deserving;

look at sin, Gen. ii. 17; Rom. v. 12, especially original sin. Learn to mortify that, kill that, which else will kill us soul and body. Secondly, Natural diseases; see the evil of corrupt nature and life, Rom. vi. 23. Thirdly, Violent: 1. From magistrates; first, Justly, learn to fear such wickedness, Deut. xvii. 13; secondly, Unjustly, learn constancy to the death, Rev. ii. 10. 2. From thieves and robbers: and then learn, (1.) To walk regularly with God, who else may and will deliver into such hands, Ezek. xxi. 31; (2.) If the man slain were godly, learn to avoid the misconstructions which are wont to be made of it, Prov. xxv. 26. 3. From self; either through, (1.) Distress, as Saul; (2.) Disgrace, as Ahithophel; (3.) Despair, as Judas. Hence learn patience in affliction, with faith to prevent all such evil.

In the manner of it. First, Some die. 1. Suddenly, Job xxi. 13, 23, 24; hence learn, first, Preparation for sudden changes; secondly, Submission to reproofs, Prov. xxix. 1. 2. Lingeringly, Job xxi. 25; hence learn not patience only, but long-suffering. Secondly, Some die distracted. Learn hence, 1. To commit our senses and understanding to God; 2. Settle peace of conscience, which will keep our minds in Christ, when not in our senses, Phil. iv. 7.

In the subject. 1. Some die in sin, carnal persons; and they die, first, Either as stones, 1 Sam. xxv. 37, 38; hence learn weanedness from worldliness, which stupefies the heart. Secondly, Or presuming, Mat. vii. 22; hence learn to build on a rock, Mat. vii. 24-27. Thirdly, Or despairing, as Judas; hence learn to beware of sins against conscience. 2. Others die in Christ; and that, first, Either troubled in mind, conflicting with desolutions, Mat. xxvii. 46; hence learn to live by faith against sense, Job xii. 15; Luke xxiii. 46. Secondly, Or uncomfortably: 1. Expressing their joy and confidence, 2 Tim. iv. 6-8; 2. Instructing and exhorting others, Gen. xlix; hence learn, first, To live uprightly and justly, Ps. xxxvii. 37; secondly, Boldness in Christ against death, Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Ver. 3. *Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.*

¹ Query, 'comfortably'?—Ed.

Ver. 4. *The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.*

Ver. 5. *It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.*

Ver. 6. *For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity.*

In verse 2 Solomon had preferred going to the house of mourning above going to the house of mirth, whereof he gave two reasons before; the first taken from the condition of the house of mourning: it is the end of all men. The second from the spiritual improvement which living men will make of it: 'The living will lay it to heart,' ver. 2. Now in this verse he giveth another reason of it. 3. From the pre-eminence of sorrow above laughter: 'Sorrow is better than laughter.' And this he proveth, first, From the benefit of a sad countenance: 'By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better,' ver. 3. Secondly, From the pre-eminence of such men, whose hearts are in the house of mourning, above those whose hearts are in the house of mirth: 'The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, the hearts of fools in the house of mirth,' ver. 4. Thirdly, From the pre-eminence of hearing the rebuke of the wise, which causeth sorrow, above hearing the song of fools, ver. 5; the vanity whereof is amplified by a comparison, ver. 6. כָּעֵץ, here translated *sorrow*, cometh of a root which signifieth properly to provoke, as Deut. xxxii. 19. Now, because a man may be provoked either to anger or to grief, therefore this word is sometimes translated *anger*, Eccles. vii. 9; sometimes *grief* or *sorrow*, as Eccles. xi. 10; Ps. cxii. 10; and here.

Doct. Sorrow is better than light mirth, ver. 3. Laughter expresseth light or frolic mirth.

For right understanding this point, consider these points: First, Sorrow when God calleth for mirth, and joy and mirth and laughter when God calleth for sorrow and mourning, are both alike odious to God, Deut. xxviii. 47, 48; Gen. iv. 6; Isa. xxii. 12-14; Jer. xlviii. 27. Secondly, Godly sorrow and mourning, and spiritual joy and rejoicing, are both alike acceptable to God and profitable to a man, 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11; Neh. viii. 10. Thirdly, Sorrow for sin, and upon rebukes for sin, is better than frolic joy and mirth in vain company, Eccles. vii. 5. Fourthly, Sorrow for outward affliction is better

than light mirth for slight occasions. These two latter hold forth Solomon's meaning, and are the sense of the doctrine, Heb. xi. 25 ; Job xxxvi. 21.

Reason 1. From the benefit of a sad countenance. As it springeth from a heart seriously affected, so it stirreth up serious affections, meditations, and conferences in the hearts of others. A merry countenance is apt to stir up to loose and dissolute, vain and frothy meditations, affections, conferences.

Reason 2. From the condition of the house of mourning; it is a suitable object to the heart of a wise man: his heart is there. Sad objects to the heart are as ballast to the ship, making it to go steady; whereas the house of mirth is a suitable object to the heart of fools, ver. 4.

Reason 3. From the pre-eminence or betterment of hearing the rebuke of the wise, which causeth sorrow, than the song of fools, which causeth light mirth, ver. 5 ; which may appear, 1. From the great benefit of wise reproofs. They are as, first, Pricks to let out corruption, Acts ii. 37 ; secondly, Goads to stir up to duty, Eccles. xii. 11 ; thirdly, Nails to drive in and fasten good counsel, Eccles. xii. 11 ; fourthly, Balm to heal sores, Ps. cxli. 5. 2. From the vanity of fools' laughter and light mirth. It is as the crackling of thorns under a pot, ver. 6 ; not like the fire of thorns under a pot, which is soon kindled and fair blazed, but like the noise, which first is no good melody. Secondly, Spends much fuel, as fools' mirth much time. Thirdly, Soon decayeth and dampeth, and leaveth both meat in the pot raw, and bystanders not thoroughly warmed, Ps. cxviii. 12, and lviii. 9. So doth the mirth of fools, Prov. xv. 13.

Use 1. Against the chief good of epicures, which is pleasure. Sadness is better than it.

Use 2. To teach us contentment, yea, and thankfulness too, when God sendeth occasions of sorrow and sadness for affliction, Job i. 21.

Obj. Psalm xxxv. 27.

Ans. Prosperity that will best hold and least corrupt, is that which is sown in tears, Ps. cxlvi. 5, 6. This sad winter Christmas, as they call it, is better than all the carnal jollity wont heretofore to be exercised at that time of the year.

Use 3. For a sign of trial of our hearts. Where they delight to be, such they are. If they delight

to be in the house of mirth, they are vain and foolish; if in the house of mourning, they are wise, Mat. vi. 21.

Use 4. To teach us who are fittest instruments to dispense reproofs—wise men, ver. 5 ; Prov. xv. 12. The wise and the reprover are synonyma, Prov. xxv. 12. Great wisdom requisite to discern, first, Of faults, whether beams or motes; secondly, Of the offenders, how more or less easy to be wrought upon, as the body in physic, Prov. xvii. 10.

Use 5. To exhort to patient and willing hearing of just reproofs: a sound chiding is better music than the song of fools. It is an ornament if well heard, Prov. xxv. 12, as arguing humility, wisdom, sincerity, or fondness, Prov. ix. 8, 9. Sound flesh will abide rubbing; not so galled. They are the way of life, Prov. x. 17, and wisdom, Prov. xv. 22, 31.

Ver. 7. *Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart.*

Translated surely. I do not find that ever the conjunction so signifieth in Scripture, but as it is translated in ver. 6, for so it is fitly to be translated here. *Surely*, neither standeth with the grammar or logic of the text: no coherence will so be made of the sentence. But translate it *for*, and the context runs thus: Solomon had said, ver. 5, It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than the song of fools.

This he proveth, first, From the vanity of the song of fools, illustrated by a simile taken from the crackling of thorns under a pot, ver. 6. Of this was spoken in the former verse.

Secondly, From the madness of the oppression of such a reprover. To oppress a wise reprover, 1. Makes a wise man mad: a wise man, whether it be, 1. The reprov'd—he will grow outrageous by oppressing his reprover, as did Asa, 2 Chron. xvi. 10. 2. The reprover—oppression may distemper him, Jer. xx. 7–9, and 14–18. Secondly, Destroys the heart, or life, of the gift. Gift cannot properly or grammatically be the nominative case before the verb, but by anomaly; for it is of the feminine gender, the verb *destroy* of the masculine; neither is the sense so suitable here.

Thirdly, From the excellency of the end of a word,

בְּרִי, to wit, the word of reproof, above the beginning of it; the beginning of it may be harsh and unpleasant, but the end of it is wholesome and medicinable, ver. 8.

Fourthly, From the excellency of the patient in spirit (as otherwise, so especially in hearing and bearing the reproofs of the wise) above the proud in spirit, ver. 8. Whereupon he inferreth a grave and wise admonition, not to be of a hasty spirit to anger, neither in hearing reproofs, nor generally in any other case, taken from the proper subject of the residence of anger: for 'anger resteth in the bosom of fools,' ver. 9.

Doct. It is better to hear and bear the rebuke of the wise with submission and patience, than with oppression and passion, with pride and anger. This seemeth to be the very proper scope of Solomon's words in this place, 2 Sam. xii. 7-13; 2 Chron. xix. 2-4; 1 Kings xxii. 8, 'Let not the king say so;' Mat. xvi. 23; Gal. iii. 11-14.

Reason 1. From the madness that a wise man shall fall into by oppressing a wise reprovcr; in that, first, He will distemper and enrage himself, 2 Chron. xvi. 10. Secondly, He will destroy the heart and life of the gift of reproof. It will no more profit than physic vomited up, or a plaster cast aside. Thirdly, He may also distemper and enrage the reprovcr, Jer. xx. 7-9, 14-20. At least it will force him to keep silence, Amos v. 10, 13. This may be referred to the second.

Reason 2. From the excellency of the word of reproof in the end, above what it appeareth in the beginning, Ps. cxiv. 5; Prov. xxviii. 33. Physic may be bitter and loathsome at first, yet health by it recompenseth that.

Reason 3. From the excellency of the patient in spirit, above the proud in spirit, ver. 8. Patience, first, Possesseth the soul, Luke xxi. 19; secondly, Inheriteth promises, Heb. vi. 12; thirdly, It maketh us perfect, James i. 4.

Reason 4. Implied in the text, ver. 8, from the root of all rejection of reproof, which is pride of spirit, Prov. xiii. 1, and xv. 12. Pride, first, God abhorreth, and scorneth, and resisteth, 1 Pet. v. 5; Ps. cxxxviii. 6; Prov. iii. 34. Secondly, Is the preface of sudden destruction, Prov. xxix. 1.

Use 1. To teach us to eschew all oppression, espe-

cially of our reprovers. It argueth us and maketh us mad, Prov. xxviii. 16; it discourageth a reprovcr from putting forth the faithfulness of his brotherly love, Jer. xx. 9; Amos v. 13; yea, he is now excused in his silence, Mat. vii. 6; it eateth out the heart and life of a gift, of the reproof given, 1 Kings xxii. 8, 27, 28; 2 Kings v. 12, 13.

Use 2. To teach us to be patient in hearing and bearing reproofs. The end of them is better than the beginning; the beginning may seem harsh and bitter, but the end is wholesome and comfortable, as of all afflictions, Heb. xii. 11; 2 Cor. i. 6, 7, and chaps. vii.-xi. It is not meant of all things universally that their end is better than their beginning, for it is otherwise in some things, 2 Pet. ii. 20; Mat. xii. 45; Prov. xx. 21; but it holdeth in this duty of admonition, and all afflictions inward and outward to the godly. All impatience here argueth pride of spirit, as appeareth by the opposition, text, ver. 8.

Use 3. To teach us to express patience rather than pride, and to prefer it both in our judgments and in our practice. אָרֶךְ רוּחַ is a man of a long breath, which argueth a patient spirit. Men of a short breath are soon hot; men of hot hearts breathe quick and hot, as in choleric and aguish men. Patient in spirit exceeds the proud, first, In understanding and wisdom, Prov. xvii. 27; רִוּחַ קָרִי, *frijidus spiritu*, a man of a cool spirit is of great understanding. Secondly, In strength and courage, Prov. xxv. 28, and xvi. 32. Thirdly, In honour, Prov. xxii. 4. Fourthly, In profiting by all means of grace: in word, Luke viii. 15; in affections, Rom. v. 3-5. Some think it their excellency and magnanimity to bear no coals at any man's hand, but to give every man as good as he brings. Patience they condemn for cowardice, but the Spirit of God judgeth otherwise.

Ver. 9. *Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.*

Doct. 1. To be of a hasty spirit to anger, God forbids it to his people, Prov. xiv. 17; James i. 19; Prov. xvi. 32. The spirit is hasty to anger when anger ariseth, first, Without cause, Gen. iv. 5, 6; Jonah iv. 9; this is hasting before the cause. Secondly, Without measure; passing the bounds.

1. Of our calling, Acts vii. 26, 27; Gen. xxxiv. 25, with xlix. 7; 2. Of love—first, As when instead of brotherly admonition we fall to clamour, railing, scolding, not reproving sin by Scripture names and arguments, but vexatious terms, Eph. iv. 31; secondly, When we are not fit to pray for those we are angry with, Exod. xxxii. 29–32; 1 Sam. viii. 6, with xii. 23, and xv. 35. 3. Of reason, Luke vi. 11; Acts xxii. 23; 2 Chron. xxviii. 9. 4. Of justice, Zech. i. 15. 5. Of due season: (1.) After sun-setting, Eph. iv. 26, 27; (2.) After the offender's acknowledgment of his offence, Luke xvii. 3, 4. And these are hasting before the measure or proportion of the cause.

Reason 1. From the proper subject of the residence and rest of anger; it resteth in the bosom of fools. Text, wherein Solomon takes off an excuse which men are wont to make of their foolishness: Though I be somewhat hasty, yet I thank God anger doth not rest with me. Yes, saith Solomon, if thou beest hasty, anger resteth with thee, and argueth thee a fool. For a man could not have anger so ready at hand hastily if it did not rest with him; the habit of sinful anger resteth there, though the act be quickly transient.

Obj. Choleric men are soon stirred, and yet they are not all fools. The fools are commonly sanguine, as the simple, light, fond-fool; or phlegmatic, as the dull ass-fool; or melancholic, as the lunatic fool.

Ans. A choleric fool is a frantic fool. Every complexion in excess is subject to folly, yea, to madness; but if choler be subdued to reason, choleric men, though they could be soon hasty if they see cause, yet will not be where there is none. A man of quick speed for race yet will not run till he see cause.

Quest. But what folly is in anger?

Ans. First, Rashness, Isa. xxxii. 4; secondly, Stiffness, Jonah iv. 9—blind wilfulness; thirdly, Outrageousness, Prov. xxvii. 4; fourthly, Unprofitableness. Anger unfitteth a man, first, To do good, James i. 28; secondly, To take good, 2 Kings v. 12. As a man, when his house is all on a-light fire, himself in the midst of it, can hear no direction given him from without, nor himself able to do aught within; so is a man in a burning anger neither able to direct himself, nor to take counsel from others.

Reason 2. From the image of God, which should shine forth in us. He is slow to anger, Ps. ciii. 8.

Use. To cast discouragement, as it were cool water, upon this angry passion. The sea, when it foameth and rageth, purgeth itself, and a pot boiling casteth out foam and scum, but a man boiling with anger and wrath, both uttereth his own shame, and yet keepeth the filth within. Physicians count it a sign of deadly ague, when the sickness or distemper so altereth the countenance that you cannot know the same man, so Job xiv. 20. Anger will do as much, Dan. ii. 19. Physicians will also say it is a sign of the healing and abatement of an ague, when in a hot fit the tongue is clean; but if the tongue be foul, it is a sign the disease is still strong. When a man in his anger giveth never a foul word, it is a sign of a healthful spirit; but the soul is distempered, if the speech in anger be foul. If a glass bottle be full of clean water, though it be stirred, there ariseth no mud; but if mud arise when it is stirred, the water was foul in the bottom: so is the spirit of a man foul within, that being stirred sheweth distemper. Let therefore all hastiness to anger against all sorts of persons at all times be eschewed. For Solomon here limiteth it to none: be it against husband or wife, child or servant, friends or enemies. 2. Yet this hindereth not just anger, Eph. iv. 26; 3. But it much more condemneth all malice, hatred, study of revenge, for all these are from anger resting in the bosom.

Ver. 10. *Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.*

Solomon in this chapter hath hitherto shewed the vanity of sundry things of good account in the world, in comparison of other things of less esteem; and hath therefore preferred, first, A good name before a good ointment; secondly, The day of death before the birthday; thirdly, To go to the house of mourning before going to the house of feasting; fourthly, To hear the rebuke of the wise before the song of fools. In this verse he goeth on with the like argument, not preferring elder times before the present, though men generally are apt so to do. Parts two: 1. A prohibition of taking it for granted that elder times are better than these, and of the in-

quiry after the reason of it. Say not thou, What is it that the former times were better than these? 2. A reason of the prohibition, taken from the want of wisdom in such an apprehension and inquiry: for thou dost not inquire wisely, or out of wisdom, concerning this.

Doct. 1. The ordinary conceit that men have of the excellency of former times above these, and their ordinary inquiry into the reason thereof, is not out of wisdom. Heathen authors may be quoted, not for divine or evangelical points, but natural or moral. Both heathen and Christians are wont to have such a conceit, that former times were better. Horace's old man is *laudator temporis acti, se puero*. Again, saith he, *Damnosa quid non imminuit dies? Etus parentum peior avis tulit nos nequiores, mox daturos progeniem vitiosiore*. Boetius, (*de consolatione philosophiæ*.) *Fortunata nimium prior ætas*, &c.

Thus ordinarily men extol the cheapness of former times—their great hospitality, their kind neighbourhood, their honest dealing, their skilful workmanship, none such now-a-days; their liberal alms-deeds, their devout piety, their deep wisdom, their valiant acts. The reasons which men are wont to give of it are not wise: as, first, *Lassa efficta natura*; the decay of the strength and goodness of nature in the world and all the creatures. But this is no good reason: for nature decayed by the flood, yet the times have been better. Secondly, The goodness of the old religion, Jer. xlv. 17, 18. The heathen thought the empire flourished more under the worship of Jupiter, and other false gods, than under Christian religion. The devouter papists think the same—that it was a better world under their religion than ours; but if the old religion have been worse, the following times may be worse for their sins, Jer. xli. 21–23. Thirdly, The change of times which some think are always for the worse; so Emanuel Sa. But neither times nor stars were made to rule us.

Reason of the want of wisdom of such a conceit and such inquiry. First, From the like estate of former times as of these; no new thing under the sun, Eccles. i. 9.

Secondly, From the cause of the worse appearance of present times, from fond mistakings. As, first, In youth want of judgment to discern and judge of

good or evil; thy judgment then was green and raw. Young men's spirits are green and cheerful; and so looking through a green glass, as it were, thou sawest all things green and pleasant. Old men are splenetic and sad, and see all things through dark and sad fumes, and so accordingly think hardly of them; besides, by better experience, old men now can discern much evil which before they could not observe. Secondly, Through ignorance of history, which speaketh of as bad times as ours; or else through the choice that historians make to tell of notable matters, and neglect common occurrences. Besides, it is pleasant to read in stories of great wars and exploits; but to feel them would seem tragical. Thirdly, Through following sense in this conceit, evils present seem worst: as in governments, so in the whole life of man. Fourthly, Through discontentment with a man's own personal condition, and envy at others, and vainglory in ourselves; hence Nestor, *Oh mihi præteritos referat si, &c. Vitio malignitatis humane vetera semper in laude, presentia fastidio esse*, Tacitus. Fifthly, Through curiosity, whilst men look more at others than themselves; whereas if every man laboured to amend himself, the times would soon amend.

Reason 2. From the true estate of this matter, which may be discerned and observed in these particulars: first, When princes and people are good in God's sight, the times are better, 2 Chron. xv. 1–6; Prov. xxix. 2; when they are wicked, then worse, *ibid.*; Jer. xxii. 15–18; Lev. xxvi. throughout; Deut. xxviii. David's time better than Saul's, but Rehoboam's afterwards worse. Secondly, When churches are well administered, and encouraged therein, the times are better, else worse, Hosea ii. 16–23, with ver. 8, 9. Thirdly, Sometimes the times are better for some thing, and worse for others, both formerly and after. David's time better than Solomon's for war and noble victories; Solomon's better for peace and plenty, and building and merchandise. In the same times, one place may be growing better, when another groweth worse; Ephesus may be decaying, when Thyatira increaseth, Rev. ii. 4, 19. Some in every age are good; even now there be men *antiqua fide, præcis moribus*; and some in every age are naughty.

Reason 3. From the principal cause of all passages

in the world ; which is not man's weakness or goodness, but chiefly the wise, and strong, and good providence of God, who presenteth every age with a new stage of acts and actors, 1 Cor. iv. 9. And if a poet would not present his spectators but with choice variety of matters, how much less God ?

Obj. Nebuchadnezzar's image may seem to imply a decay of each age, from gold to silver, from silver to brass, at last to iron, Dan. ii. 31-33.

Ans. First, This image concerned times four hundred years after Solomon's days. Secondly, After all those monarchies destroyed, the latter times will be best, Dan. vii. 27, with ii. 44. Thirdly, The image doth not decipher the manners—to wit, virtues or vices—of the times, but the several conditions of the monarchies. That of Babel being more full of majesty, Dan. iv. 36, and peace, Jer. xxix. 7 ; that of Persia inferior herein, Dan. ix. 25, troublous times ; that of Macedonia making strong and loud noise like brass ; that of Rome crushing all the former like iron.

Use 1. To teach us to observe the depravation of nature in the blindness of our minds ; who are so far from discerning spiritual things, 1 Cor. ii. 14, that we cannot rightly judge of moral or civil things, Rom. i. 21 ; Jude 10 ; Gen. vi. 5.

Use 2. To reprove the fond admiration of elder times. Though there be use of antiquity, and of the study of antiquity, yet not to approve all their sayings and doings as best.

Use 3. To stir us up to a wise consideration of our present times, and the amendment thereof. For this end, first, Every one to endeavour to amend one, and as many more as are under their charge, Joshua xxiv. 15. Secondly, Consider and see to the good administration of churches. If Joseph in the house of Jacob be sold into Egypt, look for a public famine. Thirdly, Let magistrates and courts walk in righteousness and peace ; the whole country fareth the better for it.

Ver. 11. *Wisdom is good with an inheritance : and by it there is profit to them that see the sun.*

Ver. 12. *For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence : but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.*

Solomon, in the former verse, having judged it to

spring from want of wisdom, to conceive the former times to be always better than the latter, and to inquire, as men ordinarily do, of the reason thereof, he giveth in these and the following verses three several observations touching the better and worse estate of one age above another ; as at any time, so for his own time. First, For his own time, wherein wisdom and wealth abounded, he telleth us not that it was better than other times, but that it was, so far forth, a good time. Wisdom, saith he, is good with an inheritance, and profitable for men, ver. 11. And this he proveth, 1. From the benefits which either of them yield apart. Wisdom is a defence, or rather a protection or refreshing, and money is the like, ver. 12. 2. From the more excellent benefit of wisdom. But the excellency of wisdom is, it giveth life to the owners of it, ver. 12. Secondly, He calleth us to consider the work of God in the estate of the times, as in his own age, so in every age ; and the insufficiency of any man to make straight that which God hath made crooked, ver. 13, and therefore to make a good use of the vicissitude of changes from age to age, ver. 14. Thirdly, He declareth that in the best times—at least, in his own time—he hath seen much evil, which he specieth, ver. 15 to the end of the chapter ; and some good, ver. 19, 28.

Doct. 1. Wisdom and wealth are then most profitable, (or do then most good,) when they are enjoyed together, (or when they are met together.) It is then best for any person in whom they are so met, and best for any age, when the same age enjoyeth both. Thus much God implieth in his blessing of Solomon, 1 Kings iii. 10-13 ; for he preferreth Solomon above all former and present kings in respect of the concurrences of both these.

Reason 1. From the defect that is found in either wisdom or wealth alone. Of wisdom alone, first, It is not heard nor regarded, Eccles. ix. 16 ; secondly, It seldom getteth up to such places of authority where it may put forth itself, Prov. xix. 7. He wants friends to speak and make way for him. Of wealth alone, first, It lieth unprofitably by us, neither doing ourselves or others that good it might, Prov. xvii. 16 ; Luke viii. 14 ; secondly, It maketh men worse, Eccles. v. 13, proud, 1 Tim. vi. 17, covetous, Hab. ii. 5, and churlish, 1 Sam. xxv. 10,

11; thirdly, It expositeth us to contempt, 1 Sam. xxv. 25.

Reason 2. From some benefit in either of them alone. Wisdom is a defence, the word is *a shadow* in the text; which is, first, For defence, Ps. xvii. 8; secondly, For refreshing, Isa. xxv. 4, 5. Wealth is a defence and refreshing. 1. Against hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, and injuries of suits. 2. Procuring us many friends, Prov. xiv. 20, and many other outward comforts, Eccles. x. 19. Wisdom is a defence and refreshing, first, As conveying us under the wings of Christ, Mat. vii. 24, 25; and so, 1. Giving life to us, and direction to our way; 2. Defending us from sin, hell, wrath, Job xxviii. 28, and afflictions and evils, Prov. xxii. 35. Secondly, Counselling others for their good, Eccles. x. 10.

Reason 3. From the complete profit of both wisdom and wealth together. For, 1. Wisdom employeth wealth to the best advantage, both for another world, Luke xvi. 8, 9, and for this world: First, For ourselves and others in the education of children; secondly, In peace and war, Prov. xxiv. 5, 6. 2. Wealth employeth wisdom to the best advantage. It is a crown to the wise, Prov. xiv. 24; a crown for honour and authority, Hosea xiii. 1. Job having lost his wealth, lost his honour and authority, Job xxix. throughout, compared with chap. xxx. 1, 9-13.

Use 1. To refute the popish opinion of the perfection of the estate of voluntary poverty.

Use 2. To shew us the feeble and comfortless estate of such as want both wisdom and wealth.

Use 3. To teach wise men to seek for wealth, and wealthy men for wisdom, and all that want both to seek both. If either alone be so helpful, how much more both together. If either alone be defective, not so both together.

Use 4. To teach such as would marry to seek both these together, if they may be had. But let the wealthy man rather seek a wise wife, as David did Abigail, than a wealthy.

Use 5. To teach us what use to make of them both together, for a defence and refreshing.

Use 6. To prefer wisdom above wealth; wisdom is the more excellent, as giving life, text. If we trust in the shadow of wealth, we shall find it, like Jonah's gourd, failing us when we have most need,

Prov. xi. 4; therefore crack not thy conscience for wealth, Prov. x. 2.

Ver. 13. *Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked?*

Ver. 14. *In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other; to the end that man should find nothing after him.*

Doct. Whatsoever the estate of times be, it is our part to consider the work of God as so disposing the times, and in setting good and evil times one against another; and accordingly in good times to be in goodness, and in ill times to look at God's hand as only able to amend therein. As who should say, Look not at the creature as the chief agent in the estate of the times, but consider his hand in all estates, and make use of them, as his hand leadeth unto, Job i. 21.

1. It is God's work, first, To send, 1. Good times, 2 Chron. ii. 11; 2. Evil times, Prov. xxviii. 2. Secondly, To set good and evil times in a vicissitude or interchange, one contrary over against another, Jer. xviii. 7, 9. In good times, first, God maketh men's, or at least some chief men's, hearts and ways right before him, 1 Sam. xiii. 14; secondly, God giveth them a right course, and good success in their proceedings, Jer. xxii. 15, 16; 2 Chron. xvii. 3-5. In evil times, first, God giveth men up to the crookedness of their own hearts and ways, Ps. cxxv. 5, and lxxxi. 11, 12; 2 Chron. xxviii. 1; secondly, God sendeth them cross and crooked issues of their ways, 2 Chron. xxviii. 1-6, 16-20; Jer. xxii. 17-19; Ps. xviii. 26.

2. God setteth these good and evil times interchangeably one against another. Saul's times were bad; the times of David and Solomon good. Rehoboam and Abijam bad; Asa and Jehoshaphat good. Joram and Joash bad; Uzziah and Jotham good. Ahaz bad; Hezekiah good. Manasseh and Amon bad; Josias good; his successors to the captivity bad, after the captivity good.

Reason 1. From God's people's abuse of prosperity unto self-confidence, Ps. xxx. 6, 7, and luxury, Deut. xxxii. 15; hence followeth calamity and adversity.

Reason 2. From the humiliation and reformation

of God's people in adversity, Hosea v. 15, with vi. 1, 2.

Reason 3. To the end we should find nothing after God, as in the text—to wit, first, No stability in the creature, but unsettled vicissitudes; secondly, No fault in God and his administrations. So the phrase and word is taken, John xiv. 30; Job xxxi. 7.

3. Accordingly it is our parts in good times to be in goodness, ver. 14. It implieth, first, To be in a good frame; secondly, To take a good course; thirdly, To be of good cheer or comfort—to be joyful; as husbandmen make hay when the sun shineth, and mariners hoist up and spread abroad their sails when the wind bloweth fair, Acts ix. 31.

Reason 1. From God's expectation of store of good fruit in such times, Isa. v. 1-4.

Reason 2. From God's sudden change of times, when they are thus abused, Isa. v. 5, 6; Dent. xxviii. 47, 48.

In evil times to look at God's hand, as only able to amend them, Prov. xxi. 1.

Reason 1. From God's sovereign power over, first, Men's hearts, Prov. xxi. 1; secondly, The change of times, Acts i. 7; Ps. xxxi. 15.

Reason 2. From the unprofitableness of all the use of creature means and helps without God, Isa. xxii. 8-14; Hosea v. 13, 14; 2 Chron. xxviii. 20, 21.

Use 1. To teach us in all the estate of times not to look so much at the creatures or instruments, but at the hand of God. If princes be wicked, God giveth such, and the people into their hands, Hosea xiii. 11; Zech. xi. 6. If princes be good, the Lord giveth such as a favour to his people, 2 Chron. ii. 11. Heathens could say, *Deus nobis hæc otia fecit.*

Use 2. To teach us, whatever the times be, not to look at them as unchangeable; for God will set one of them contrary to another, and we know not how soon.

Use 3. To teach us therefore in good times to be in goodness—that is, first, Be in a good and thankful frame; secondly, Take a good course, Acts ix. 31—be fruitful; thirdly, Be of good comfort. Break off from sinful courses; it will prolong tranquillity, Dan. iv. 7.

Use 4. To teach us in ill times not chiefly to quarrel the creature, much less to quarrel God's providence, Isa. viii. 21; neither to imagine that

we can redress the evil of the times by our own wisdom or power. No; look we rather up to God, who can make straight that which is crooked, both in men's hearts, ways, or estates; and therefore use we such means as may prevail with him so to do.

Means: first, Let our uncircumcised hearts be humbled to accept of the punishment of our iniquities, and to confess our iniquities, and the iniquities of our fathers, Lev. xxvi. 40, 41, where we have confession and contrition; secondly, Look up to Christ our Redeemer, the prince of the kings of the earth, to deliver us, Judges x. 15; thirdly, Serious reformation, Judges x. 15.

Ver. 15. *All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness.*

Ver. 16. *Be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself overwise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself?*

Ver. 17. *Be not overmuch wicked; neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?*

Ver. 18. *It is good that thou shouldst take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.*

Coherence, see in ver. 11, 12.

Decl. In the best times of church and commonwealth, a wise man may observe there are just men that perish in their righteousness, and there are wicked men that continue long in their wickedness. By perishing, sundry understand crushing and breaking, or oppression in their righteousness, in their righteous and just cause; as Naboth in Ahab's time, 1 Kings xxi. 13; and Ahimelech in Saul's time, 1 Sam. xxii. 16, 18, 19. But it will be hard, if not impossible, to shew such an instance in Solomon's time, though in David's time Uriah so perished; but that was before Solomon was born. But he speaketh of what he had seen in his time. By a wicked man continuing long in his wickedness, they understand prolonging his days or his life in wickedness; but his life is not in the text. And if that were the sense, it would cross his reason which he giveth in ver. 17, why they should not continue long in wickedness; taken from the shortness of

the lives of such ; for why shouldst thou die before thy time ? I take it therefore by a just man is meant, such a just man as is just in his own righteousness, and at last decayeth and perisheth in it. The same word is translated *void*, Deut. xxxii. 28 ; void of counsel, is perishing in their counsels. So the rich man is said to fade away and perish in his ways, as the flower perisheth and fadeth in the heat of the sun, Job viii. 11. Thus the Jews, establishing their own righteousness, Rom. x. 3, perished in their righteousness, and did not obtain the righteousness of Christ, Rom. xi. 7, and ix. 31, 32. And thus Solomon might observe many in his age ; and like enough an eminent man in the church, Abiathar the high priest, 1 Kings ii. 26, 27. Ezekiel observed many such in his time, Ezek. xviii. 24. That many do continue long in their wickedness, appeareth by Solomon's testimony, Eccles. viii. 12 ; by David's, Ps. lxxviii. 21 ; by Job's, chap. iii. 2 ; by Isaiah, chap. lxx. 20.

Reasons of the just man's perishing in his righteousness : 1. From the carnalness of such a just man's heart ; his nature is not born anew, but only awed by some power, either of, first, Legal terrors, Deut. v. 27 ; secondly, Good education, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2, 17, 18 ; thirdly, Good company. Such as return to evil, were always dogs and swine, though washed and cleansed, 2 Pet. ii. 18, 22.

Reason 2. From God's rejection of all self-confidence, Jer. ii. 27 ; Luke xviii. 9, 14 ; 1 Sam. ii. 9.

Reason 3. From the power of the spirit of the gospel to blow upon and wither all his carnal and moral excellency, Isa. xl. 6-8.

Reason 4. From the stability only of faith in Christ, and the righteousness of faith, Isa. vii. 9 ; 2 Cor. i. 24 ; Rom. xi. 20.

Reasons of the wicked's long continuance in wickedness : 1. From the suitableness of it to our nature, Gen. vi. 5 ; Job xv. 16 ; Jer. xi. 15.

Reason 2. From God's judicial leaving of men to their own ways, especially after refusal of means of grace, Ezek. xxiv. 13 ; Rev. xxii. 11.

Use 1. Not to be righteous overmuch, ver. 16—that is, first, Do not continue in this righteousness, in the same sense as be not wicked overmuch ; secondly, Make not too much of it ; for upon trial, it neither is our righteousness, Phil. iii. 7, 8, nor a

good evidence of it ; trust not in it, Luke xviii. 9. It is a mercy if God shake us out of it. A double shaking is requisite to enjoy a settled kingdom : shaking, first, Of our earth, which was by the law, Heb. xii. 26 ; secondly, Of our heaven, which is by the conviction of our righteousness, in which we place our heaven upon earth, to be lost and cross till we come to partake in Christ, and faith in him.

Use 2. Not to be wicked overmuch,—that is, not to multiply wickedness by continuing long in it ; not make more of wickedness than it is worth by promising ourselves rest in it, Deut. xxix. 19 ; Ps. xxxvi. 2 ; nor make yourselves more wicked than you are, as Cain did, by despair, Gen. iv. 13.

Use 3. To humble us in the sense of the corruption of our nature, who are sooner weary of our righteousness than of our wickedness. In the one we decay, in the other we continue long.

Ver. 16. Be not righteous overmuch ; neither make thyself overwise : why shouldst thou destroy thyself ?

Ver. 17. Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish : why shouldst thou die before thy time ?

Ver. 18. It is good that thou shouldst take hold of this ; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand : for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.

In the former verse Solomon delivered his third observation touching the estate of the present times, to wit, what notable things he had observed in his own time. First, That he had observed in the days of his vanity a just man perishing in his righteousness, and a wicked man holding out long in his wickedness ; a second, see ver. 19 ; a third, see ver. 20 ; a fourth, see ver. 21, 22 ; a fifth, see ver. 23, 24 ; a sixth, see ver. 25, 26. But from that first observation Solomon inferreth a double corollary, first, Against excessive righteousness, which he dissuadeth from, 1. By the disease accompanying it, which is overmuch wisdom ; 2. By the danger following it : Why wilt thou destroy thyself ? Secondly, Against continuance and growth in wickedness, which he dissuadeth from, first, By the disease accompanying it, folly ; he not foolish. Secondly, By the danger following it, untimely death, ver. 17 ; and urgeth the acceptance of both these counsels by two motives : 1. By the goodness of both ; 2. By

the help of God to eschew both the contrary evils, ver. 18: be not righteous overmuch. First, Some take this and the next verse to be spoken by Solomon in the person of an epicure or carnal politician: seeing righteous men do sometime perish in their righteousness, when wicked men prolong their days in wickedness, it is a good course not to be over-just. And yet, lest that should seem too gross and offensive, it is a good course also not to be over-wicked, but to keep a mean between both. But if Solomon spake in the person of the wicked, he would not second it with his own approbation of the goodness of both courses, ver. 18. Besides, Solomon would not leave such corrupt counsel without some aspersion of folly or vanity upon it, as he doth in the like case, Eccles. iv. 5, 6. Ver. 5 sheweth ver. 6 to be spoken in the person of the slothful man.

Secondly, Others think by just overmuch he meaneth rigorously just, who will remit no punishments, nor debts, nor rights, but exact justice to extremity. And, indeed, had David punished Joab for his murder of Abner and Amasa, he had destroyed himself, 2 Sam. iii. 39. But that overmuch righteousness is opposed to clemency or moderation, whereas this here is opposed to wickedness.

Thirdly, Others therefore understand the righteousness here spoken of to be *universalis justitia*, universal righteousness, opposite to all wickedness. But neither can that be the meaning of the word here; for, 1. No man can exceed in that righteousness, he cannot be overmuch righteous in that sense—no, though he were as righteous as angels, as Christ Jesus, yea, infinitely righteous as God is; Ps. xvi. 3, 'to the excellent.' 2. Neither can a man in Scripture phrase be said to perish in that righteousness though he should die for it. Stephen dying for his righteousness, or any other martyr, is never said to perish in his righteousness, but to glorify God, John xxi. 18, 19; yea, and to honour and prefer himself, 2 Tim. ii. 12; 2 Cor. iv. 17. But in Scripture phrase a man is said to perish in his iniquity, Joshua xxxii. 20.

Fourthly, It remaineth therefore that by overmuch righteousness is meant righteousness over and above the rule of the word, as by overmuch wisdom, coupled herewith, is meant wisdom above that which is written, 1 Cor. iv. 6. Of this over-

much righteousness there be three sorts: 1. That which is called legal righteousness; so called, not because it is answerable to the law, but because justiciaries take it so, as Paul sometimes did, and other Jews and papists, Phil. iii. 6.

Quest. 1. But how can this be overmuch, which is over-little?

Ans. As wisdom is called overmuch, which yet falleth short of true wisdom.

Quest. 2. Wherein standeth the overmuchness of this righteousness?

Ans. 1. In a man's overmuch esteem of it, and overmuch confidence of his own estate by it; he taketh it to be true righteousness, whereas it is neither true justification, Phil. iii. 7, 8, nor sanctification, or inherent righteousness, Mat. v. 20. 2. In a man's overmuch confidence of his ability by the strength of it; the Israelites by it undertook and vowed universal obedience, which, without a better heart, they could not perform, Deut. xxvii. 29. As, first, When we presume to walk in the strength of it, and not by faith in Christ, Mat. xxvi. 33, 35; secondly, When we discern no defect in our best duties, Neh. xiii. 22; thirdly, When we think we have earned any reward at God's hand by it, Luke xvii. 10.

2. Righteousness of works of supererogation, Micah vi. 6, 7, works above what the law required, in which also a man may perish.

3. Righteousness of works of good intention, as that of Uzzah, intending to save the ark by touching it against the law, 2 Sam. vi. 6, with Num. iv. 15, in which he died, 2 Sam. vi. 7. So Saul's sacrifice, out of a good intention, but against a commandment, lost his kingdom, 1 Sam. xiii. 12-14; see also, 1 Sam. xv. 21, 12, 23.

4. Righteousness inherent, prized above the word; righteousness of a cause over-eagerly maintained, as in Job's case, justifying himself rather than God, which was overmuch righteousness. Yet this fourth may be rather handled as a consecratory in the verse, for no man perisheth in this righteousness, though he may fall folly.

Doct. Excess of righteousness, or to be righteous overmuch, is accompanied with an overweening conceit of a man's own wisdom, and followed with causeless destruction of a man's self, ver. 16.

Solomon joining this warning, Neither make thyself overwise, to the former. Be not righteous overmuch, implieth, that an overweening conceit of our own wisdom doth accompany overmuch righteousness. And adding this reason, For why wilt thou destroy thyself? he implieth that these will procure destruction, and that without cause; and therefore he asketh, why?

Reason 1. Why it is accompanied with overmuch wisdom; because it maketh us wise without the word, and above the word, which ought not to be. 1 Cor. iv. 6. The word is the rule of wisdom, Isa. viii. 20.

Reason 2. Why it is followed with certain danger of destruction; because, first, It is ever joined with pride, which is a forerunner of destruction, Prov. xvi. 18. Secondly, It reflecteth imperfection and insufficiency upon God's wisdom and word. For it is less dishonour to God that a man do a sin against the word, than a good duty above the word; the one argueth frailty and imperfection in us, the other in God. Thirdly, It submitteth not itself to the righteousness of Christ, but men in it go about to set up a saviour without Christ, and against him, Rom. ix. 31, 32, with xi. 7. Christ is indeed our wisdom, 1 Cor. i. 24, and righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30; Jer. xxiii. 6.

Use 1. To prevent and refute the misapplying of this text to the reproach and discouragement of growth and forwardness in grace and Christian duties. Even the heathen philosopher Aristotle could say, Though virtue consisteth in a mediocrity between two extremes, yet not in a mediocrity of degrees of goodness, but in a hyperbole or excess. *Politie.* lib. vii. cap. 1. Yea, it reproveth the despising of legal duties; for though they be not righteousness, yet they are gifts of the Spirit, restraining from sin, constraining to duty, and a greater gift from God than riches or honour. Brass is good, only it is counterfeit when it is put off for gold.

Use 2. To dissuade and direct from all this excess of righteousness here forbidden; not from the duties, but from taking them for our righteousness. When we have lived long in them, they are either our righteousness imputed or inherent.

Quest. What would you have us to do more?

Ans. 1. Know why Christ is good, as Mat. xix.

17: feel your, first, Want of him and of faith in him, John xvi. 7, 8; 2. Worth of him, Cant. iv. 10. Secondly, Listen duly to the word for some promise, doctrine, or example of grace, in which Christ is wont to convey his Spirit to lost souls to beget faith; 1. Either persuading us of grace from God to our souls in him, Ps. cxix. 43; 2. Or at least setting up him in our hearts as our sovereign good, Ps. lxxiii. 25, 36. Thirdly, If you feel him not applying promises to you, nor himself in any word of grace with power, pray over the promises, and meditate on them; they will so give faith. Observe if this do not utterly pull down all our high thoughts of former worth in ourselves, Prov. xxx. 2, and do not make us sensible of our own disability to any duty, 2 Cor. iii. 15. If the Lord thus carry us forth, it will take us off from overmuch righteousness, which will leave us destitute and desolate of Christ for our justification, and of the Spirit for our sanctification. Beware likewise of resting in works of good intention, without or beside the word.

Sincere righteousness may be overmuch prized, when we, first, Presume to walk in the strength of it, and not of faith, Mat. xxvi. 33, 35. Secondly, When we discern no defects in our best duties, Neh. xiii. 22. Thirdly, When we think we have earned any reward at God's hand by it, Luke xvii. 10.

Ver. 17. Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?

Be not wicked overmuch, though the word is הרבה, as before, אף, תרשע, not, be not overmuch wicked, but do not wickedly overmuch,) but yet, if we take it as it is translated, the sense is the same.

To be wicked overmuch implieth two things: 1. Aggravation of sin beyond the word; 2. Multiplication of it. First, To make a man's self more wicked than the word maketh him; so excessively wicked as thereupon to shut out a man's self from all hope of mercy, or otherwise worse than he is. This excess a man that is convinced of the emptiness of his righteousness, which he prized overmuch before, is apt to sink into, even to despair. Cain, who before thought himself as righteous as his brother, and his sacrifice as acceptable as his, being convinced by God of his wickedness, sunk into despair of mercy, Gen. iv. 15. Hence also some think they have

sinned against the Holy Ghost; others, that they have quenched the Spirit, whenas rather the Spirit hath enlightened and awaked them. But this sense doth not fully answer the opposition in ver. 14, though it answer well enough to ver. 16.

Secondly, The phrase may well be translated, Do not evil much, that is, do not multiply transgression; as Amos iv. 4, the word is used in this sense. Sin is multiplied either, 1. By continuance in it, Rom. vi. 1; 2. By growth unto full measure of iniquity, Mat. xxiii. 32. A curse.

Doct. Excessive aggravation of sin, and all continuance and growth in sin, is accompanied with folly, and followed with untimely death. Sin is excessively aggravated when it is made, first, Greater than can be forgiven, as Gen. iv. 13; see the original. So when we judge we have sinned against the Holy Ghost, when we have only lost the comforts of the Spirit. Secondly, Greater than will be forgiven, in regard either of our present hardness of heart, which we despair of softening, or in regard of our persons, which we judge to be reprobate. Thirdly, A sin of a higher kind than it is, as that to be a sin of presumption, when it is but a sin of infirmity, though against light. Fourthly, Our sin, and springing up in us, which is but cast into us by Satan; as thoughts of blasphemy darted into us, which our hearts tremble at and abhor. The weeds that are cast in over the pale into a man's garden, are not the weeds of the garden, till the soil give rooting to them, that is, consent. This is folly, as not judging of ourselves or our sins according to the word, which is the rule of wisdom, Isa. viii. 20; 2 Tim. iii. 17, but according, 1. To our present sense, which in spiritual matters is blind and foolish, and very changeable; 2. To the suggestion of our enemy. This bringeth to untimely death, sometime by violent self-murder, Mat. xxvii. 4, 5.

Quest. But how can a man die before his time?

Ans. Not before the time which God hath appointed, Job xiv. 5, yet before the time, first, Of the course of nature; secondly, Of our expectation of it; thirdly, Of our preparation for it. Continuance and growth in sin is, first, Foolish, Prov. xiv. 16, and xiii. 9. As utterly against the word, Rom. vi. 1; and as flattering us with empty hopes of impunity, Deut. xxix. 19, and of repentance hereafter.

Secondly, Destructive and deadly before the time, Ps. lxxviii. 21, and lv. 23: 1. Every sin which we commit setting us a step further off from salvation, Ps. cxix. 155; Rom. xiii. 11, (*a pari*); 2. As kindling a greater fire of God's wrath, and adding more fuel to the fire, Deut. xxix. 19, 20; Amos ii. 13; 3. As hardening the heart more and more unto impenitency, Heb. iii. 34; Rom. ii. 15; 4. As filling a vessel of dishonour the sooner full to the brim, Gen. xv. 16.

Quest. But how is this continuance and growth in sin said to be overmuch?

Ans. Because the former course of our wickedness may suffice us, 1 Peter iv. 3.

Use 1. To dehort from aggravation of sin in any excessive measure above the word, though according to the word it be most wholesome, Ps. xl. 12; Ezra ix. 6.

Use 2. To dehort from continuance and growth in sin, Dan. iv. 27; 1 Peter iv. 3. Continuance implieth, first, Repetition of the act after we know it to be sin, Prov. xix. 19; not so Judah, Gen. xxxviii. 26. Secondly, Impenitency after it, only forbearance of the act; which may be feared in Judah, Gen. xxxviii. 26, till after Joseph had humbled, as an instrument in God's hand, him and his brethren. Thirdly, Toleration of the root of it, without mortification of it. Thus Jonah, repenting of his forsaking his call, but not mortifying the pride of his heart, (which was the root of it), brake forth again, Jonah iv. 9. Growth in sin, as when, first, More resolute, Jer. xlv. 16, 17; secondly, More skilful at it, Jer. iv. 22, wise to do evil; thirdly, More bold, Isa. iii. 9; fourthly, More outrageous, proceeding from evil to worse, to higher degrees of wickedness, 2 Tim. iii. 13; Isa. i. 5.

Ver 18. *It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.*

The two former admonitions in the verses next foregoing Solomon amplifieth, first, By a motive to the taking hold of them, taken from the goodness thereof. Secondly, By the means whereby we may perform what is required, and eschew the evils dehorted from; and that means is the fear of God. Thirdly, By an argument from the strength and

supportance which this wisdom bringeth to a wise man, above great friends, ver. 19.

Doct. 1. It is a good thing to take hold of such admonitions as may keep us from excess either of righteousness or wickedness, or from overmuch either righteousness or wickedness. To take hold—which is done, first, By faith : both, 1. In the word, else it profiteth not, Heb. iv. 2 ; 2. In the Lord to help us by his strength, both of power, wisdom, and grace, Isa. xxvii. 5. Secondly, By hearty affection, as a precious treasure, Ps. cxix. 11. Thirdly, By caution and circumspection. Here to take heed is to take hold, Acts xvi. 14 ; Heb. ii. 1 ; wanting in Jehu, 2 Kings x. 31. Fourthly, By practice ; so the word is taken, Prov. ii. 19. It is good not to be over-righteous : first, To prevent the evil of desolation threatened, ver. 16. Desolation signifieth, 1. Solitude, left to a solitary condition ; 2. Confusion, as Dan. iv. 19, astonishment ; 3. Destruction. Over-much righteousness bringeth, (1.) Desertion from God, Luke i. 53, and xviii. 9, 14—we first deserting him, Rom. x. 3 ; desertion from men, Job xxxii. 1 ; (2.) Confusion through disappointment of a man's end and hopes, Rom. ix. 30–32 ; (3.) Destruction ; for what shall satisfy for former sins and for defects of this righteousness ? Secondly, To obtain the contrary solace, 1. Of peace with God, Rom. v. 1 ; Isa. xxxii. 17 ; 2. Of establishment and encouragement in ill hours, Isa. xxviii. 16, with 1 Peter ii. 6 ; 3. Of salvation, Prov. xii. 18. It is good not to be over-wicked, first, To prevent the evils of despair and of untimely death ; as also to prevent the evils of continuance and growth in sin, mentioned in ver. 17, page 72. Secondly, To obtain the good, 1. Of hope of possibility of help. It taketh hold of God's strength, Isa. xxvii. 5 ; Mark i. 40 ; and it stirreth up to the use of means, Ezra x. 2–4 ; 2. Of sincere reformation or breaking off the course of sin. First, Prolonging of tranquillity, Dan. iv. 27. Secondly, Finding of mercy, Prov. xxviii. 13.

Use 1. To whet upon us both these admonitions—to beware both of overmuch righteousness and of overmuch wickedness in all the former particulars.

Use 2. To exhort us to grow up and walk on in the fear of God ; which might have been handled as a distinct doctrine, being expressly mentioned in the text. The fear of God is a good preservation against

excess both of righteousness and wickedness—against excess of righteousness, Deut. v. 27 with 29 ; against excess of wickedness, Prov. xvi. 6, xiv. 16, and xxviii. 14 ; Jer. xxxii. 40.

Reason 1. It emptieth a man of self-confidence, Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Reason 2. It keepeth the heart soft, Prov. xxviii. 14.

Reason 3. To exhort us how to carry ourselves toward wholesome admonitions—to wit, as here Solomon warneth, to take hold of them in all the four particulars specified in opening the meaning of the text, Prov. iv. 13.

Ver. 19. *Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city.*

These words give another reason why we should beware of the folly of sin, and of the overmuch wisdom of excessive righteousness, taken from the safeguard or strong protection and deliverance which this wisdom will procure to a wise man, and that amplified *a minori*, from the less supportance and deliverance which many great friends in court or city might afford him.

Doct. The wisdom of an innocent and truly righteous life, will yield a man greater supportance and safer deliverance than many great friends in court or city, Prov. xxiv. 5 ; Job xxii. 23, 30. For the original text speaketh of this wisdom,—that is, this wisdom whereby a man avoideth both the folly of continuance in sin, ver. 17, and the overmuch wisdom of excessive righteousness, ver. 16, in both of which men undo or destroy themselves. To this wisdom will strengthen a man more, to wit, by supportance and by deliverance, than ten, that is, many, שְׁלֹשִׁים, princely lords and friends in the city, meaning the court which resided in the city, and whereto they resorted. Ten often put for many, Num. xiv. 22 ; Job xix. 3.

Reason 1. From the presence and protection of God with such whose ways are pure and upright before him, 2 Chron. xvi. 9 ; Ps. xviii. 20, 21, 23, 24. God is, first, The light of our countenance, Ps. xlii. 11, and xliii. 5 ; secondly, The staff of our maintenance, Ps. xvi. 5 ; thirdly, The horn of our deliverance, Ps. xviii. 2.

Reason 2. From the protection and ministry of

angels, who are greater than the greatest men, Ps. xxxiv. 7, and xci. 11, 12; 2 Kings vi. 15-20.

Reason 3. From the favour which ways of true righteousness find even of strangers, 1 Pet. iii. 13; Job v. 19-23, even of enemies, Prov. xvi. 7.

Reason 4. From the failing of all great friends, when God's hand is heavy upon them; as also in death, when righteousness faileth not, Prov. xi. 4; Ps. cxlvi. 3, 4, and lxxxviii. 18; Job vi. 15-21, and ix. 13.

Use 1. To remove the stumbling-block out of the way, which hindereth many from breaking off their sinful courses—to wit, from the loss of their great friends. Nay, the ways of true righteousness procure great friends, by God's overruling hand, Prov. xxii. 11; 2 Kings x. 15, 16. Jehu was but a hypocrite, yet would countenance a good man, and take countenance from him; even wicked princes by persuasion have befriended the church.

Use 2. To exhort such private Christians, and the whole state of the country, to walk and grow up in this wisdom: it may be our strength when all else may fail us in city and country, Ps. xxvii. 10, 11.

Ver. 20. *For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*

Solomon having commended this wisdom, (as strengthening the wise above many great friends in court or city,) whereby a man neither maketh himself over-righteous nor over-wicked, in this verse he giveth a reason of it, taken from the infirmity of the most righteous man upon earth. As who should say, Do not make yourself over-righteous, so righteous as no fault to be found in you, (as Ephraim did, Hosea xii. 8;) for there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Doct. 1. Perfection of righteousness, so as to do good without sin, is not to be found in any man; no, not in the best man upon the earth, 1 Kings viii. 46; Ps. cxxx. 3, and cxliii. 2; Job ix. 3, 30, 31. Clothes defile, as testifying our sinful nakedness, which was the cause of it, Gen. iii. 7. The meaning of the doctrine is, first, That in many things (and in some things more than others) all men, even the best man, do sin, James iii. 2, either omitting good, or committing evil—Noah, Abraham, Lot, Moses, David, Peter. Secondly, That in all

things, in our best actions, we sin something, Neh. xiii. 22; Exod. xxviii. 38; Ps. lxxx. 4; Rev. viii. 3, 4.

Reason 1. From God's wise and just desertion of every one of his servants some time or other, for a season; either to know what is in our hearts, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, or to chasten, first, Our carnal self-confidence, Mat. xxvi. 33, 35, and so to chasten our neglect of stirring up ourselves to lay hold of God, Isa. lxiv. 6, 7; secondly, Our uncircumspect and unjust walking, neglect of pondering the paths of our feet, Ps. cxix. 9; Prov. iv. 26.

Reason 2. From the contrary lusting between the flesh and spirit, Gal. v. 17; hence floweth an impossibility of doing any one duty perfectly. Lust in him sinneth, not the person. If rebellious or irregular subjects of confederate princes trespass one upon another, it is not the trespass of the state, whilst the princes condemn it and punish it: now the judgment and will are *ἡγμονιὰ* in a man; the carnal part are but as rebellious subjects.

Use 1. To refute, 1. Perfection of works held by papists and Catharists of old; and herewith, possibility of keeping the law. 2. Justification by works, Ps. cxliii. 2; Rom. iii. 23, 24. 3. Merit of works. 4. Supererogation. 5. The immaculate perfection of the Virgin Mary, *ἀμω* in the text, comprehendeth women as well as men, Gen. i. 26, 27.

Use 2. To convince carnal wicked men of their abundance of sin, seeing the most godly and just fall, Job xv. 16.

Use 3. To shew us where our happiness lieth, to wit, not in our own innocency, but in the covering of our sins, Ps. xxxii. 1, 2; and therefore we seek for all our righteousness in Christ, Phil. iii. 7-9; Rom. iii. 23, 24.

Use 4. To mortify pride of our best duties.

Use 5. To teach us to bear evils at God's hand patiently, Micah vii. 9.

Use 6. Not to be masterly censorious of the failings of our brethren, James iii. 1, 2; John viii. 7.

Use 7. To comfort the godly righteous against the fear and grief of death in ourselves, or our Christian friends. In death the spirits of just men are made perfect, Heb. xii. 33; else death were not the last enemy, if sin remained after it, contrary to 1 Cor. xv. 26.

Ver. 21. *Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servant curse thee.*

Ver. 22. *For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.*

Solomon having observed, ver. 20, that there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not, he hence inferreth this corollary, not to set a man's heart upon all the words that are spoken, not upon all their hard sayings and ill speeches, wherein all men, even the most wise and just, are sometimes to blame, either in speaking or in giving occasion to be spoken.

Parts, two; first, An exhortation not to set our hearts on all the words spoken; that is, 1. Not to listen after them, 1 Sam. xxiv. 9, with 1 Sam. xx. 8-10; 2. Not to be over-deeply affected with them, 1 Sam. xviii. 7, 8; 3. Not to pursue the same with revenge, 2 Sam. xix. 19, 20. Secondly, Confirmation, by reasons two: 1. From the inconvenience which may easily attend it; so a man may hear his own servant cursing him or slighting him, ver. 21. 2. From the conveniency of God's wise and just hand in measuring to us as we have measured to others, which that we have done, Solomon argueth from the testimony of his own conscience, ver. 22.

Doct. 1. It is not good to set a man's heart upon all men's speeches of him; no, not upon the hard and slight speeches of his own servants against him, to wit, first, In case men speak vanity, to wit, 1. Out of a vanity of mind, not upon any grounded cause or just occasion, Ps. xii. 2. and exliv. 8; 2. Vanity of words, that are not likely to weaken a man in his calling, 1 Cor. iv. 3, else Paul stirred if his calling suffered, 2 Cor. x. 10, 11. Secondly, In case the words be spoken by men, whose tongues are their own, whom a man can have no means to restrain, Ps. xxxviii. 12-14. Thirdly, In case of apparent evidence of our innocency to the contrary, Job xxxi. 35-37. Fourthly, In time of public or private, special and weighty, avocation, another way; by humiliation, 2 Sam. xvi. 10, 11, and by rejoicing, 2 Sam. xix. 22. Otherwise it is meet in due time to take notice of any grounded and serious speech that may tend to the prejudice of our calling, and thereby to be stirred up, first, To search our hearts and ways, to see if we have not done the same, or the like evil; secondly, To clear ourselves if innocent, to repent and amend if guilty.

Reason 1. From the vanity often found in such

speeches, who take liberty to speak at random, without occasion, without consideration, without any real detriment to ourselves or callings, Ps. lxxiii. 9.

Reason 2. From the love and piety we are to bear to men; occasions of enmity and discord we should put out of our minds, Lev. xix. 18.

Reason 3. From the office of our memory and heart, which is the treasury of our souls, Mat. xii. 35; and therefore not to be filled with trash, Jer. iv. 14; Luke ii. 51; on the contrary.

Reason 4. From the peace and tranquillity of our own spirits, which should not depend upon men's judgments or speeches, but upon God's, 1 Cor. iv. 3; 2 Cor. i. 12.

Reason 5. From the privacy of our own conscience to our own slight speeches of others, Eccles. vii. 21, 22.

Use 1. To teach us this part of the circumcision of the heart and ear, neither, first, To listen with the ear unto all vain speeches of a man's self; secondly, Nor to set the heart thereupon in such a manner as to trouble ourselves and others in vain.

Use 2. From the latter reason mentioned in the text, learn we, first, To walk circumspectly in the sight of our own hearts and consciences, else they will bear witness against us, 1 Kings ii. 44; secondly, To be the more patient if others wrong us in the like kind, as our own hearts tell us we have wronged others, Judges i. 6, 7; Mat. vii. 1, 2.

Ver. 23. *All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me.*

Ver. 24. *That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?*

Ver. 25. *I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness.*

In these words Solomon maketh another observation of that which was meet for all men to observe by his example; even what befell himself in the search of wisdom in his own times; which was, first, That in all his search of wisdom, to wit, by the works of creation and providence, and by tracing out happiness in the courses which men are wont to take for it, he found that wisdom was too far off, and too deep for him, ver. 23, 24. Secondly, That

missing of wisdom in the way, he applied his heart, or turned it about, to seek for wisdom in taking account of himself, and seeking to know the wickedness of his own folly, and the foolishness of his own madness, ver. 25. *And the reason of things* is better translated, *and the account of myself* or my ways, &c., ver. 25.

Doct. 1. The sense of our vast and deep distances from attaining wisdom by the study of the creatures, and of the vanity of the ways of men, is a just motive to apply our hearts to make diligent search for wisdom in taking account of our own ways, and in the knowledge of the wickedness of our folly, and the foolishness of our own madness. To know, to seek, to search, ver. 25, do all imply a diligent search. The doctrine consisteth of two branches : first, That by the knowledge of the creatures he shall find himself still at a great distance from wisdom, and wisdom more deep than to be digged out of the creatures ; secondly, That hereupon Solomon was moved to seek it in looking homewards into his own heart and ways, and the folly and madness and wickedness thereof. The former branch is testified, 1 Cor. i. 21 ; Rom. i. 21, 22 ; Job xxviii. 12-14, 20-22.

Reasons of the former : 1. From the distance and depth of Christ from the creatures, and from the knowledge of them all. Christ is the wisdom both of God, 1 Cor. i. 24, and of us, 1 Cor. i. 30. But the wisest could never discern Christ by the creature, 1 Cor. ii. 6-9 ; hence not the creature, but the word is perfect to convert souls, Ps. xix. 1-7.

Reason 2. From the aptness of the creature, and the knowledge of it, by reason of the curse that lieth upon it, to puff us up, Isa. xlvii. 10. Solomon confesseth himself, I said I will be wise this way, presuming of his knowledge, text.

Of the latter, that hereupon Solomon was moved to search after wisdom in taking account of himself and the folly of his own course :—

Reason 1. From the excellency of man himself. Above all the creatures, he is the lord of them all, and so their lord, Gen. i. 28, 29 ; and therefore more may be found in observing a man's self, than all the other creatures.

Reason 2. From the vanity and vexation of spirit which all the creatures yield to a man. A man is

justly occasioned to look into the root and cause of it in himself.

Use 1. To convince all the wise philosophers of the heathens of the vast distance of wisdom from them ; for they had no further means of wisdom than what Solomon, improving to the utmost, found far off from conveying true wisdom to him, Rom. i. 22. A warning to scholars not to overvalue wisdom and knowledge which they have from the creatures.

Use 2. To teach us that in taking just account of ourselves and our ways we shall find our former course folly, even the wickedness of folly and madness, even the foolishness of madness, 2 Sam. xxiv. 19 ; Acts xxvi. 11 ; Job xl. 4, 5, and xlii. 6 ; Jer. ii. 19 ; 2 Chron. xvi. 9 ; Ezek. vi. 9, and xxxvi. 31.

Use 3. To teach us a difference of the wisdom of God revealed in the creatures. It is far off and deep, text ; not so in the gospel, Deut. xxx. 11-14, with Rom. x. 6, 7.

Use 4. To teach us there is much wisdom may be learned from knowing our own wickedness, foolishness, and madness. He was more than a common wise man that said, Prov. xxx. 2, 'Surely I am more foolish than any man ;' 1 Cor. iii. 18 ; Jer. x. 14. For, first, The sense of our own folly and wickedness maketh us low and base, and so humbleth us before the Lord ; secondly, The sense of our folly directeth us to seek true wisdom in Christ and in his word.

Ver. 26. And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands : whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her ; but the sinner shall be taken by her.

Solomon in the three former verses, having observed that in all the former search after wisdom he had not found it in the creature, he therefore applied his heart to seek out by wisdom the wickedness of his own folly, and the foolishness of his own madness. And in these verses, to the end of the chapter, he giveth the church an account both of what he had found upon taking account, and of his want of taking account : to wit, three things—first, An adulterous and idolatrous woman more bitter than death ; whom he describeth, 1. By her effects :

(1.) She is as snares slyly to catch; (2.) Her heart as traps; (3.) Her hands as bands. 2. By the subject persons about whom she is conversant; and they are either good in God's sight, and they are delivered from her, or sinners, and they are taken by her, ver. 26. Secondly, The rarity of faithful admonitions amongst men, especially amongst women, ver. 28, which he amplifieth by his diligent and incessant search, ver. 27. Thirdly, The vast distance of a man by his fall from his state of creation, or the vain and sinful fruits of man's fall from the state wherein God created him, ver. 29.

Doct. 1. A man that setteth himself unfeignedly, or, to use Solomon's words, that applieth and turneth his heart wisely to search out his own wickedness, folly, and madness, shall find the instruments that led him into temptation and sin more bitter than death, as Solomon here found his wives and concubines, who drew him to maintenance of idolatry, 1 Kings xi. 3, 4.

Reason 1. From the shame and indignity put upon him by his wives and concubines, that were idolaters, pleading, it seemeth, liberty of conscience; whence he first granteth toleration, then countenance and assistance to their idols, erecting temples to them; whence altars, ornaments, priest, and all upon mount Olivet, before the face of the Lord in his temple, 1 Kings xi. 7, 8; 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

Reason 2. From the bitterness of sin, and that even above death, Jer. ii. 19; Acts viii. 23; Deut. xxxii. 32, 33. All the ingredients of bitterness are found in sin, which have made men bitterly to mourn; as, first, The loss of the blessing of a heavenly Father, Gen. xxvii. 34, a *minor*; secondly, Cruel bondage, worse than Egyptian, Exod. i. 14; thirdly, Bitter water causing the curse, Num. v. 24. Yea, sin is more bitter than death: as, first, Being the death of the soul, Rom. vii. 11, which is so much the more bitter than the death of the body, as the life of the soul is more sweet and precious than the life of the body; secondly, Depriving us of the presence and favour of God, which is better than life, Isa. lix. 2; Ps. lxxiii. 3.

Reason 3. From the bitterness of godly sorrow or repentance, Mat. xxvi. 75; Zech. xii. 10. Matters of such bitterness in godly sorrows: first, For that we have pierced our dearest and best friends, Zech.

xii. 10. Secondly, That by sin we have destroyed the beauty and strength, 1. Of family, as of our firstborn or only child; 2. Of church and commonwealth, as in the mourning for Josiah at Hadadrimmon, Zech. xii. 10, 11. Hence, Lam. iii. 15, with 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, Solomon could not but see in his fall the division of the kingdom, 1 Kings xi. 40. Hence corruption of religion in them, then in Judah also, to the utter destruction of all.

Use 1. To teach us concerning Solomon, first That Solomon did indeed repent after his fall secondly, That he wrote this book after his repentance.

Use 2. To wean all men from sin; it will be bitterness in the end, 2 Sam. ii. 26; Acts viii. 23; Prov. xxiii. 31, 32, v. 34, 35, and xx. 17.

Use 3. To wean us from delighting in sinful companions; they will be bitter to us in the end as death, and more bitter too. Trust not in the friendship of such; for if ever they or we repent, we shall be ready to condemn and betray one another.

Use 4. To teach us a sign of true repentance, when sin groweth as bitter, yea, more bitter to us than death.

Use 5. To shew us the danger of women once corrupted, how apt, and sly, and strong they be to draw on stronger than themselves to corruption, Neh. xiii. 26.

Use 6. To be upright in God's sight, and not to rest in a sinful state and course. The one is preserved from such women and snares; the other given up to be taken by her.

Ver. 27. *Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one, to find out the account.*

Ver. 28. *Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found.*

Solomon here inferreth the manner and nature of the account which he took of his own wickedness and folly, which he describeth by three adjuncts or qualities: first, That it was exact and particular, one by one; secondly, that it was constant and continual—which still my soul seeketh; thirdly, That it was defective—which still my soul seeketh, but I find not.

Doct. 1. The account which a penitent soul taketh

of his wickedness and folly is a particular and constant account, and yet defective. Particular account, Lam. iii. 40; Zeph. ii. 1, where one part of the sense is fan yourselves; Ps. li. 5, original sin; ver. 10, a foul heart, adulterous; ver. 14, bloodguiltiness; murder, Ezek. vi. 9; Zeph. iii. 11. Constant and growing account, Ps. cxix. 59, with cxxxix. 23, 24. Defective account, Ps. xix. 12, and xxxviii. 4.

Reason of particular account: 1. From the illumination of conscience, especially when it is awakened to repentance, Prov. xx. 27. God dealeth with his servants when he humbleth them, as with carnal men; he entereth into judgment with them, Ps. cxliii. 2, and x. 15. Conscience enlightened and awakened, sits as it were God's vicegerent in the soul, who, in his judicial proceeding, is exact and particular, Mat. xii. 36; Eccles. xii. 14; Ps. xc. 8.

Reason of constant account: 1. From the sweetness of godly sorrow, 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10; the deeper the sweeter; and sorrow is the deeper and greater, by how much deeper the search is. As in bodily wounds, the deeper search into old sores, the greater pain to the body.

Reason of defective account: 1. From the deep deceitfulness of our hearts, Jer. xvii. 9; 2. From the innumerable multitude of our sins, Ps. xl. 12, and xix. 12; 3. From the imperfection of all our best knowledge of spiritual good and evil things, 1 Cor. xiii. 9.

Use 1. To reprove our overly and slippery conceit of perfect accounts. Many are loath to enter into any account at all, like bankrupt merchants, or if they do, it is but overly, Jer. viii. 6; they that do are loath to pursue it constantly—soon slip from it. The papists require a perfect examination of all particular mortal sins, as they call them, with all the circumstances of them.

Use 2. To teach us, after Solomon's example, what manner of account books we should keep between the Lord and our souls; to wit,

First, Exact and particular. Motives: 1. It prevents God's examining and judging us, when we are strict in examining and judging ourselves, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 31. 2. It will make our, first, Repentance more thorough and sincere; secondly, Prayers more fervent and humble; thirdly, Christ more precious and glorious; Fourthly, Mortification more powerful; fifthly, Heart

more watchful; sixthly, Life more regular, Ps. cxix. 39. 3. It will leave the conscience, first, More peaceable. Sin unaccounted of, will be like a debt unreckoned, and terrify, or at least trouble, the conscience, Ps. xxv. 7; Job xiii. 26. Secondly, More pure; sin unaccounted for is unpretended, and like a Canaanite, will let in the devil at the back-door; as Jonah, that repented of disobedience to God's call, but not of the pride of his heart, the cause of it, hence he is passionate again for disgrace, chap. iv. 1.

Or the second and third may be put together, as a motive from the benefit redounding, first, To ourselves, in our consciences, hearts, and lives; secondly, To our duties, in our repentance, prayers, and mortification; thirdly, To Christ.

Secondly, Constant motives: 1. Else our hearts will grow hard and barren, and full of lusts and passions, as the soil but once ploughed will grow fallow, and barren of good fruit, but abounding in weeds.

Thirdly, Sensible of its own defectiveness.

Motives.—1. It will call in for a higher search, even from God himself, without fear and terror, Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24. 2. It will stir up to prayer for pardon of secret sins, Ps. xix. 12.

Use 3. To teach us the right way of judging and admonishing others without arrogance or hypocrisy. Solomon here passeth a deep censure upon men and women, ver. 28; but before this he taketh a strict account of himself. This method is needful to reckon first with ourselves, Mat. vii. 5.

One man, &c.—*Duct.* 1. There is a great scarcity of men, worthy the name of men, or acquitting themselves like men, and greater scarcity of women worthy of the name of women; and kings of all men, especially penitent kings, have most cause to say so. Or, There is a great scarcity of good men, and a greater scarcity of good women, especially about the court. For Solomon speaketh of what himself found: One man among a thousand have I found, which argueth a great scarcity of men; and surely he doth not mean that men for the most part are no men, but not good men, not such as are worthy the name of men, that acquit themselves like men, as they should, according to 1 Cor. xvi. 13, in our several relations and employments, 2 Sam. x. 12;

see the like phrase, Prov. xviii. 22. So, 1 Chron. vi. 10, Jehoiada or Azariah, (either of both, for the Holy Ghost giveth liberty to understand either,) *sacerdotium egit*—executed the priest's office. Why, did not their predecessors and successors execute the same office? True, but not with like priestly wisdom, courage, zeal, faithfulness. There is such a like phrase in Job xxxiii. 23: 'one of a thousand, to declare to a man his righteousness,' and so his failing and falling short of it; that is a faithful admonisher of the scarcity of faithful men. David, a courtier, complaineth, Ps. xii. 1; Prov. xxxi. 10.

Reasons of few men: 1. From the paucity of the elect, Mat. xx. 16. And if not elect, then not effectually called; and then, Christ not being united to us, we are still full of selfishness, self-conceit, self-will, self-seeking.

Reason 2. From the hardness and straitness of the gate and ways of righteousness, with the contrary liberty and ease of the gate and ways of sin and death, Mat. vii. 13, 14.

Reason 3. From the variety of the changes of relations wherein a man stands. A man that is a good servant, if he become a church member, he can despise his master, whether he be carnal, because such, or a brother, because then equal in Christ. Hence 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

Reason of fewer women: 1. From the greater liableness to deceit and temptation, 1 Tim. ii. 14.

Reason 2. From their greater vehemency and impotency in their passions and lusts, not only on good objects, 2 Sam. i. 26, but on evil also, 1 Kings xxi. 25.

Reason 3. From their great superstition, Acts xiii. 50; 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7. This Solomon found by experience.

Reasons of fewest in court: 1. From the greatest paucity and rarity of great men called, 1 Cor. i. 26.

Reason 2. From the affected liberty of great men especially, Jer. v. 5.

Reason 3. From the self-seeking of flattery, frequent in courtiers, Hosea vii. 3, 5; 2 Chron. xxiv. 17; 1 Kings xxii. 13.

Reason 4. From the temptations that follow the court: immunity from controulment, Amos vii. 13; Isa. xxx. 10; impunity from the hand of justice. The court is commonly made a sanctuary for iniquity.

Use 1. To refute the papists' note of the church, multitudes; not one of a thousand. More Mohammedans than Christians of all sorts.

Use 2. To dissuade men from blessing themselves in leading such a life as most men lead, Exod. xxiii. 2. Scarcity of good store of company in good ways is no just discouragement from walking in them; yet with this caution, not therefore to neglect the multitude of the godly, whether in matters of judgment or practice, 1 Cor. xiv. 36, and xi. 16.

Use 3. To humble both men and women for this scarcity of goodness amongst us. See how low sin debaseth! We are not worthy of the name of men and women by reason thereof, Prov. xxx. 2; Ps. xlix. 20, and lxxiii. 22; 1 Cor. xv. 32; Eccles. iii. 18. Grace maketh us like to angels, yea, to God himself—amongst men, one of a thousand; but sin maketh us rather beasts than men. Not one man scarce of a thousand, or woman, that quit themselves well in all their relations.

Use 4. To wean us from affecting to live in the court; where, of all places, goodness is most rare. God threatened perferment in a great court for a great plague, 2 Kings xx. 18.

Use 5. To teach good men and good women especially to be the more thankful that God should shew us such special grace and favour, as to pass by thousands, and call us to goodness. Universal righteousness endoweth us with rare excellency, such as is scarce found in a thousand.

Ver. 29. Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

In this verse we have set down the third experiment or event which Solomon found upon taking account of his own wickedness and folly; to wit, the righteousness of God in his work about man, but man's perverse subtlety in inventing ways of backsliding, or apostasy from God.

Quest. 1. How doth he say he found this only, seeing he found two other things before? First, The bitterness of wicked women, ver. 26; secondly, The scarcity of good men, and greater scarcity of good women, ver. 18.

Ans. By only is meant chiefly, as Joshua i. 7, 8; Gal.

ii. 10; Prov. iv. 3; with 1 Chron. iii. 5; Cant. vi. 9.

Quest. 2. How is God said to make man righteous?

Ans. Righteous, first, In his first creation, Gen. i. 26, 27; secondly, His own children, such as himself and his father before him, in their regeneration, Jer. ii. 1.

Quest. What is meant by inventions, and man's seeking them out?

Ans. Inventions are translated engines, 2 Chron. xxvi. 25, as slings to offend the enemy, and bulwarks to defend ourselves. Seeking out these, argueth a perverse diligence to deal subtly in inventing ways of corrupting ourselves.

Doct. 1. A penitent soul, taking good account of his wickedness and folly, shall evidently and eminently find the righteousness of God in all his work upon us, and the perverseness and subtlety of our inventions to corrupt ourselves, even from our first parents to this day. Evidently: for lo, or behold, saith he. Eminently: for, saith he, This only, or chiefly, or eminently, have I found. Inventions: he meaneth no profitable inventions for the good of themselves or others, as arts, or manufactures, or occupations; but such inventions whereby we seek to start away from God, and to corrupt ourselves. As some horses put into a good pasture, yet will seek round about the fence to find a gap to range out. Thus Moses taught backsliding Israel, Deut. xxxi. 19, to see God's righteousness, Deut. xxxii. 4; their own perverseness, Deut. xxxii. 5, 15; Neh. ix. 33; Job xxxiii. 27, 28: God made Adam righteous at first, Gen. i. 26, 27; to wit, first, In knowledge, Col. iii. 10, giving him a right understanding of things; secondly, In holiness and righteousness, setting his heart and affections upon their proper objects, Eph. iv. 24. Right: first, As suitable to the righteous law of God, which is a straight and right rule, Ps. xvi. 8. As setting the inferior parts of the soul and whole man in a right order to the superior; will to the judgment or conscience; affections to the will, Prov. xvi. 32; outward members to both, Rom. vi. 13; all to God, Rom. vi. 13; all which are now disordered and perverted, Ps. cxv. 4, 5. Thirdly, As being in a state well pleasing to God; right in God's sight, 2 Chron. xxix. 2.

Reason of God so making us at first. The justice and holiness of God required it of himself, that if he create man to a spiritual and supernatural end—to wit, fellowship with himself—and require of him obedience to a spiritual and holy law to lead him to that end, that then he should lift him up above his reason to a holy estate by original righteousness; otherwise from his first creation he had been made sinful and crooked.

Reason of reforming man to a state of righteousness: the praise of the glory of his grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 4, 5.

Reasons of man seeking inventions: 1. From the liberty of will God left man unto, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

Reason 2. From the forwardness not to rest satisfied in the condition God had provided for him; but he would be active to improve his condition by his own wit and strength. Adam and all his posterity made righteous, sought out many inventions to fall off from God. Eve, and by her persuasion Adam, invented a way to get wisdom in the knowledge of good and evil, Gen. ii. 6. Solomon's wives invented many wiles to draw him to tolerate them in the liberty of their religion. Solomon himself invented many devices how to satisfy himself in satisfying them. Conscience is tender; faith is the gift of God. His father David compelled no pagans to circumcision. His subjects invented many shifts to put off from themselves the faithfulness of a wholesome advertisement to Solomon. The common people put it off to the nobles, the nobles to the priests, the priests to the prophets; the prophets excused themselves by the king's transcendent wisdom above them, Eccles. viii. 1. So David before him sought many inventions to cloak his sin with Bathsheba.

Reason of finding this as chiefly grievous to a penitent soul, from the proper nature of repentance, which is deepest affected with sin as it is, first, Most dishonourable to God; secondly, Most injurious to the grace of Christ, contrary to means and mercies, and pernicious to the church of Christ; thirdly, Committed with the greatest perverseness and foolish subtlety of our own hearts.

Use 1. To refute the popish doctrine that original righteousness in Adam by creation was wholly

supernatural, and given by free grace. But then Adam had been right without it, in which he was not, but right by it. It was indeed, first, Supernatural, as not flowing from the principles of nature: a man is a perfect man without it for substance; secondly, As not deserving by men who had done neither good nor evil.

Secondly, Natural, as due, first, To the purity of God's nature to make us so perfect; secondly, To the integrity of man's nature, without which he was not so perfect in qualities as were meet for God's pure nature to make. The papists herein extol the freeness of grace to Adam, not to magnify the grace of God, but to derogate from the grace of Christ. For if nature were entire and perfect without God's image, then the want of it in corrupt nature is no sin, but natural to man; and so original sin depraving nature, and requiring necessity of a new birth in Christ, is no sin, but suitable to right nature; and so original sin is no sin, not only after baptism, but even before baptism. But concupiscence is not of God's work in nature, 1 John ii. 16.

Obj. Concupiscence and rebellion of the lower parts of the soul against the higher is natural; for the man being made of a body and a soul, must needs be carried both to spiritual and sensual objects. And so this rebellion and stirring of the one part against the other will be found to arise from the principles of pure nature.

Ans. The body may affect sensual objects, and the soul spiritual, and both without sin, in subordination of sensual things to spiritual, and of both to God.

Use 2. To teach us a true sign of repentance, never to blame God for our falls, but our own perverse subtlety. God made us right, and the regenerate twice right; and his work hath been upright to upward, in leaving us to our falls; we provoked him to it by our selfishness. But it is we that have perverted our ways, and took pains—sought out devices and cunning inventions—to do wickedly. Yea, this finding out, our own perverse subtlety in seeking out inventions to depart from God, and deceive ourselves, should more deeply affect and afflict us, than all other evils besides; this bringing forth most dishonour to God, injury and abuse to the gifts and graces of Christ, and corruption of nature to ripeness and perfection.

Use 3. To teach us to loathe all evil inventions, Rom. i. 30. It is a fruit of a reprobate mind, ver. 28, with 30; such are inventors of fashions, oaths, lusts, and torments.

Use 4. To exhort us not to think ourselves right till we attain that estate wherein God made us at first; and that with greater contentment in it than he took, lest we seek, as he did, many inventions.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1. *Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed.*

Ver. 2. *I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God.*

Ver. 3. *Be not hasty to go out of his sight; stand not in an evil thing, for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him.*

Ver. 4. *Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?*

Ver. 5. *Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.*

The former chapter Solomon ended with a complaint of the inventions which men (though made righteous) are wont to seek out, both to lead themselves into sin and to excuse themselves from holy duty, either of pure worship to God, or faithful love to a brother fallen into sin; who, being fallen, might after be healed by wise and faithful admonition, but that all sorts of men are wont to seek out many inventions to excuse themselves from that unwelcome office, as they count it. It was said above, that mean men put it off to nobles, nobles to the priests, the priests to the prophets, the prophets, and indeed generally all the sorts of Solomon's loyal subjects, put it off by the inventions which here, in these words, Solomon both propoundeth and refuteth.

Invention 1. From Solomon's eminency of wisdom, together with the unsearchable depth of his counsels and proceedings, which were so deep as they were not able to search out the bottom, the meaning or interpretation of them: Who is as the man, (that is, as Solomon,) the wise man? 1 Kings iv. 31; and

who knoweth the interpretation (the reason or meaning) of his matters? Our ignorance and weakness, might his subjects say, will dash us out of countenance when we speak to him.

Refutation 1. From the power of wisdom even in a mean man, (as Adam is here meant, as also in Ps. xlix. 2.) wisdom maketh his face to shine; secondly, From the change of the strength or boldness of his face, which may be referred either to the former antecedent, and then it is meant the wise man's face, that is, Solomon's face; the boldness or strength of it, as the word signifieth, shall be changed upon a wise and just admonition or presentment of his sin before him, as Dan. v. 6. Or else it may be referred to the strength and boldness of a mean man's face, which shall be doubled, as the word also signifieth, in speaking upon just ground, in humble and discreet manner, even to the king himself, as 2 Sam. xii. 7.

Invention 2. Taken from the loyalty and submission of subjects to such great princes. I am to observe, for so it is in the original, the mouth of the king, and that in regard of the oath of God, ver. 2—to wit, the oath of allegiance. As who should say, It is not for me to inquire and dispute of matters of state, princes' commands, but to observe and do what I am commanded. If Solomon command masons and carpenters to build temples to his wives' idols, and the nobles to oversee the work, and all his subjects to contribute to it, it is not for me to gainsay, but to obey. My oath of allegiance binds me far.

Refutation. Be not hasty to go out of his sight, that is, out of the king's sight, to execute every commandment which he putteth upon thee. Joab went slowly out from the presence of king David in such a case, 2 Sam. xxiv. 3, 4. Stand not in an evil thing, as they do that perform the works of sinners, Ps. i. 1; for the king doth many times, not according to what is right and well-pleasing in the sight of God, but whatsoever pleaseth himself, ver. 3.

Invention 3. From the power and uncontrollable authority of the king's commands, and the danger of such as shall resist or speak against them, especially to his face. Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou? ver. 4.

Refutation. First, From the safety of attending God's commandment rather than man's: 'Whoso keepeth the commandment, shall feel no evil thing,' ver. 5. Secondly, From the discretion of a wise man's heart to observe both time and judgment, that is, a judicious and right manner in dealing with the king or any other great one, ver. 5.

That these words are thus to be taken by way of objection and answer, or invention and refutation, appeareth, first, Partly by the coherence with the former chapter; secondly, Partly from the unseasonableness of the preacher otherwise, if he should here extol his own transcendent wisdom and sovereign power, when he is declaring and confessing his deepest penitential sorrows, from ver. 26 to the end of the foregoing chapter.

Doct. It is not the eminency of the king's person and wisdom, nor the depths of the king's counsels and proceedings, nor the loyalty and sworn allegiance of the subjects, nor the sovereign authority and power of the commands of princes, nor any such like other invention, that can excuse subjects from admonishing princes, according to our callings, of their grievous falls into notorious scandals; for Solomon here removeth and refuteth all these excuses as vain inventions, 2 Sam. xii. 1–12; 1 Chron. xxi. 3, 4, and vi. 10; 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18, xx. 42, and xxi. 20–24; 2 Kings i. 16; 2 Chron. xvi. 7–9, and xix. 2; 2 Kings v. 13.

Obj. Job xxxiv. 18.

Ans. There is no colour for an objection if the words were not much corrupted in the translation. The original readeth it thus: That saith to a king, Thou art wicked; and to princes, Ye are ungodly; where Elihu useth it as an argument to justify God's righteousness, because he accepted no man's person—no, nor prince.

Reasons. First, From the vanity of all such pretences as might seem to excuse us from this duty, as, 1. The transcendent wisdom and depth of some princes above their poor subjects. *Ans.* First, The wisest are not always wise, Job xxxii. 9—great men, to wit, great in wisdom and power. Solomon sometimes saw his own madness, Eccles. vii. 25.

Secondly, Wisdom in a mean person will make his face shine—that is, make it, 1. Amiable, Num. vi. 25, 26; 2. Honourable and glorious, Acts vi. 15; 3. Reverend and awful, as Exod. xxxiv. 30. Thirdly,

From the falling of a bold and stern spirit before a wise reproof; for so I rather take it, because the word is ever taken in ill part, as, 1. For sternness. Deut. xxviii. 50; Isa. xxxiii. 19; Dan. viii. 23; 2. Impudency and rude boldness. Prov. vii. 13; 3. Hardness and obstinacy. Prov. xxi. 29. Thus fell the countenance of David before Nathan; of Saul before Jonathan, 1 Sam. xix. 4-6; of Ahab before Elijah, 1 Kings xxi. 27; of Felix before Paul, Acts xxiv. 25. Or if the strength of the king's countenance change not, thine shall be doubled, 1 Kings xxii. 18, 19; Dan. iii. 13, 16.

2. The loyalty of an obedient subject, and that ratified by oath. ver. 2. *Ans.* First, Yet there may be too much haste in obeying, Esther iii. 15; Dan. ii. 13, 15; as when kings command, 1. For trial, 1 Kings iii. 24, 25; 2. With change of mind. Dan. vi. 14; 3. Unlawful things; which to obey will breed smart, first, From God's hand; secondly, From man's, Hosea v. 11; Dan. vi. 24. Secondly, Obedience is only due in the Lord, Eph. vi. 1, not against him, Acts iv. 19. Thirdly, An oath and God's name in it bindeth not to sin against God, but rather the contrary.

3. The sovereign power and uncontrollable authority of princes, ver. 4. *Ans.* First, God's commandment and the keeping of it is a preservative from evil, ver. 5; he is higher than princes, Eccles. v. 8; Prov. xxi. 1. Secondly, A wise man's heart will observe a right time and manner, ver. 5; so did Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 36, 37; and Nathan, 2 Sam. xii. 1-14.

Reason 2. From the duty we owe, first, To God, the King of kings; secondly, To the king by covenant; thirdly, To the peace of the church and commonwealth.

Use 1. To exhort subjects to be faithful in admonishing magistrates when God leaveth them to scandalous falls, and giveth us a call to it; which they do, 1. When they call us to execute their sinful commands, as 1 Chron. xxi. 3, 4; 2. When by our place we are to watch over them, Ezek. iii. 17-21; 3. When they are not the sons of Belial, nor dogs, nor swine, but will hear us attending upon them. 1 Sam. xxv. 17; Mat. vii. 6; 2 Kings v. 13. Fear not the stiffness of their faces, Ezek. ii. 6, nor their wisdom, power, will.

Use 2. To teach us the best ornament of the face. It is not jewels, nor laces, nor painting, but wisdom, that makes the face to shine, ver. 1.

Use 3. To teach great men to let their countenance fall at any just admonition: 'The strength of his face shall be changed,' ver. 1.

Use 4. To teach a lawful use of an oath of fidelity and subjection to magistrates, ver. 2.

Use 5. To forbear haste in executing magistrates' commands, unless it be in lawful and expedient matters, ver. 3. Serve not kings' pleasures in evil. Doeg herein did wickedly, 1 Sam. xxii. 18; the Egyptian midwives better. Exod. i. 16, 17; and the guard of Saul, 1 Sam. xxii. 16, 17, and xiv. 44, 45.

Use 6. The sovereignty of princes leaveth them scarce any faithful friends or admonitors: scarce one of a thousand, ver. 5. See the misery of sovereignty.

Use 7. To encourage to walk in the path of God's commandments. From the indemnity and safety of such a course, ver. 5, Moses felt no harm from Pharaoh, nor Sammel from Saul, nor Nathan from David, nor Elijah from Ahab, nor Jehu from Jehoshaphat, nor Amos from Amaziah.

Obj. But Hanani did from Asa, 2 Chron. xvi. 10; Zechariah from Joash, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21; Uriah from Jehoiakim, Jer. xxvi. 23; John from Herod, Mark vi. 27; Stephen from the high priests, Acts vii. 51-59.

Ans. First, God doth often prevent such evil entertainment of the faithfulness of his servants; secondly, If they suffer imprisonment, banishment, death for God's commandment, it is no evil, but a crown of martyrdom.

Ver. 5. A wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.

These words are a second answer to the third invention which Solomon's subjects made to excuse themselves for dealing faithfully with him in some good of admonition, when he was falling into this great sin of harkening to his wives in the toleration, yea, and maintenance, of their idolatrous religion.

The invention or excuse was taken from the sovereignty and uncontrollable power and authority of princes, and the danger of opposing them, though but in word, in their way, ver. 4. Whereto Solomon answereth, and opposeth, first, The safety of obedi-

ence to the commandment of God: 'Whoso keepeth the commandment, shall feel no evil thing.' Secondly, The discretion of a wise man's heart in so observing the fit time and season, and the manner and way of an admonition, as might prevent all danger in dispensing of it even to a king or any other superior; and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment, ver. 5. Thirdly, The insufficiency of retaining our own life by retaining the king's favour, Eccles. viii. 8.

Time, that is, a fit season of an admonition.

Judgment, that is, the manner, order, or way of it, as the word is translated, 1 Sam. viii. 11.

Doct. A wise man's heart doth so well discern the time and manner of an admonition, as that he may dispense it safely, though it were to a superior, even to a king, 1 Sam. xxv. 3, 36, 37, and xix. 4-6; 2 Sam. xii. 1-12; Dan. iv. 27.

Quest. When is the fit time or season of an admonition, especially of superiors?

Ans. 1. When we are called on to be the instruments in sin, as Joab to David, 1 Chron. xxi. 2, 3; secondly, When they come to us for counsel, in the same or other matters, 1 Kings xiv. 1-16; thirdly, When others are in danger to be corrupted, unless present witness be born against the sin, Gal. ii. 13, 14; fourthly, When neither admonisher nor admonished are distempered with passion, nor prejudice, nor any choking impediment; but rather God offereth an opportunity by some word of favour or encouragement, 1 Sam. xxv. 36, 37; Esther vii. 2-4. We must hazard our favours for the service of God and his people.

Quest. 2. What is the fit manner, or order, or way of dispensing an admonition?

Ans. According to certain rules, whereof some concern, first, The person admonishing; secondly, The person admonished; thirdly, The offence for which admonition is given; fourthly, The admonition itself.

1. *Rules* concerning the admonisher: 1. The admonisher should have a calling to it, through some relation between himself and the offender. As we find it in all kinds of relations, first, A minister, 2 Sam. xii. 1-12; secondly, A counsellor, 2 Sam. xix. 5-7; thirdly, A yoke-fellow, husband, Job ii. 10; wife, 1 Sam. xxv. 36, 37; fourthly, A son, 1

Sam. xix. 4; fifthly, A servant, 2 Kings v. 13; sixthly, A subject, Dan. iv. 27; seventhly, A brother, Rev. i. 9; Col. iv. 17; eighthly, A friend, Prov. xxvii. 5, 6. Yea, a stranger travelling by the way and seeing his fellow-traveller sin, he hath as good a calling to help him up, as if himself or his beast were fallen; the relation of a companion requireth it. 2. He should be furnished with love to the offender, Lev. xix. 17; 1 Cor. xvi. 14. 3. He should first admonish, judge, and cleanse himself, Mat. vii. 5; Rom. ii. 1.

2. *Rules* concerning the admonished: first, They should not be scorned, Prov. ix. 7-9; Hosea iv. 4; Mat. vii. 6, but such as may be capable of reformation. Secondly, Brethren, especially to be admonished, yea, though excommunicate, whilst there is hope, 2 Thes. iii. 15; else, if wedded to his sin, let him alone, Hosea iv. 17. And of brethren, difference to be made, first, Of spirits: some are more sluggish, they to be admonished more sharply, Titus i. 12; Jude 23; some more tender, they to be admonished with more meekness, Gal. vi. 1; Jude 22. Secondly, Of years and place: 1. Men of greater years and place rather exhorted than reprov'd, 1 Tim. v. 1; Dan. iv. 27; 2. Inferiors with more liberty and plainness. Thirdly, Any man capable of hearing or bearing a word of admonition.

3. *Rules* concerning the sins admonished: first, They must be certainly known and convinced, 1 Cor. v. 1; Mat. xviii. 15; we may not reprove upon a suspicion, 1 Cor. xiii. 5,* nor upon our own inquisition; it is as if I should say, Let me put my finger in your eyes to feel if there be not a mote; nor upon any uncertain hearsay, Isa. xi. 3. Secondly, A difference must be put between moles and beams, gnats and camels, Mat. xxiii. 24. Camels and beams may not be admonished with gentle reproofs, 1 Sam. ii. 23, 24.

4. *Rules* concerning the admonition of itself: first, It should be dispensed in most wholesome words, such as may be most fit to gain a sinner and heal his soul. Wholesome gaining words are, first, General terms, especially at first, and against precious and gainful sins, and dangerous to be openly rebuked, Acts xix. 36, 37. Secondly, Clothed in parable, 2 Sam. xii. 1-3, &c. A garment is best seen how it becometh us on another man's back. Thirdly, De-

livered in Scripture phrase, that the offender may see God reproving him in his own words, rather than man, Mat. xv. 7-9. Fourthly, Such as acknowledge some good where it is, as well as see faults, Rev. ii. 2-4; pills would be given in sugar. Secondly, In order. Less sins would be first reprov'd; John first reprov'd Herod for less matters, Mark vi. 26, before he came to the matter of Herodias. *Vada prius perturbanda*, Jer. xii. 5.

Reason of the doctrine: from a wise man's self-denial; hence God guideth and blesseth him, Prov. iii. 5-7.

Use 1. To instruct us in this great and difficult, yet most necessary, duty of love, admonition; to neglect it wholly is a hatred of our brother in our heart, Lev. xix. 17. All the excuses of it are sinful inventions. To tell others of it, not themselves, is a slander and malice, Prov. xxvi. 28; to admonish offenders themselves, not in fit time and manner, is to spill the admonition, to take an ordinance in vain.

Use 2. To teach the admonished to take such a duty in good part, as a precious balm, Ps. cxli. 5, as a jewel or golden earring, Prov. xxv. 12.

Ver. 6. Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.

Ver. 7. For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?

Solomon had in the former verse given it as one means of safety to a subject, in admonishing his prince going astray, to wit, a wise man's heart discerning both time and judgment, the fit season and fit manner of such a duty. In these words he amplifieth this fit time and judgment by the universality of the subject, to which time and judgment is fitted; and that is, to every purpose or business, and he meaneth every lawful and good purpose or business; for there is no time nor manner fit to commit sin. Whence he inferreth as a corollary, that the misery of man is great upon him; and withal he giveth the reason why such great misery falleth upon men in respect of the time and judgment fitted to every action, taken from man's ignorance of that time and judgment, which he expresseth both by a man's own ignorance thereof, and by other men's unfitness to

tell him, ver. 7: Who shall tell him for the time when it shall be, or for the manner how it shall be? The word signifieth both. The words afford three observations, which we may handle in order, and make use of them together.

Doct. 1. To every lawful purpose and business there is a fit time and manner for the doing of it. For persons, Acts xiii. 36, 25; for thoughts, 1 Kings v. 5, with 2 Sam. vii. 3; for words, Prov. xxv. 11; for actions, Ps. xxxii. 6; Isa. lv. 6; John ii. 4, 7, 8.

Reason 1. From the sovereignty of God to appoint times and seasons, Acts xvii. 7.

Reason 2. From the beauty of everything in its time, Eccles. iii. 11.

Reason 3. From the necessity of the concurrence of all due circumstances to make an action good, 2 Sam. xvii. 7; 2 Kings v. 26.

Doct. 2. Men ordinarily are ignorant of the time and manner of doing any business, especially spiritually good, ver. 7. As the Hebrew renders it—to wit, what that time should be, and how or after what manner it should be, Eccles. ix. 12; 2 Cor. iii. 5; Jer. x. 23. The text speaketh chiefly of ordinary men, not of the godly wise; for the wise know time and judgment, ver. 5, but ordinary men, they neither know time and judgment themselves, nor do others tell them. Ordinary men consult with men like themselves, who mislead them, 1 Kings xii. 8.

Reason 1. From the want of the inward light of the image of God, they are darkness, John i. 5; Eph. v. 8.

Reason 2. They are self-confident and full, walking without counsel, Prov. xiv. 16, and xxviii. 26.

Reason 3. If they consult, it is not with God, Isa. xxx. 1, 2; Ps. x. 4; nor with his word, and then no light, Isa. viii. 20; but with foolish and wicked men like themselves, 1 Kings xii. 8.

Doct. 3. For want of discerning and observing fit time and manner, the misery of man is great upon him, ver. 6; Gen. xxvii. 12-24, with xxxi. 40, 41; 1 Sam. viii. 5-18, and xiii. 8-13; 2 Kings v. 26, 27; 1 Kings xii. 7, 19; 2 Chron. xxxv. 22-24.

Reason 1. From God's delight and good pleasure to vouchsafe his presence, his concourse, and his blessing, when actions are done in God's time, and

after his manner, Ps. xxxii. 6; Isa. lv. 6; and his refusal thereof, when otherwise, Num. xiv. 42; 1 Sam. xiii. 13; Heb. xii. 17.

Reason 2. From the snare and net that lieth upon men in every action done out of due time and manner, Eccles. ix. 12; 2 Chron. xxxv. 22-24, with Lam. iv. 20. Crosses may befall a man in the best actions; but snares, inextricable difficulties, befall men only in evil ways, and good things done out of due time and manner.

Use 1. To teach us to discern and observe not only our words and all our ways, but even the fit time and manner of them, as we do desire to be freed of the great misery that else may befall us. Jacob sought the blessing out of due time and manner; it cost him twenty years hard service; and his mother, that counselled him amiss, never lived to see him again. The Israelites sought a king out of due time and manner, and brought upon themselves the misery of twenty years' tyranny. It is dangerous missing the time of our conversion, Luke xix. 42-44; missing the time of helping on our families to God-ward, Hosea xiv. 7; they utterly miscarry, 1 Sam. xx. 30. So for the church and temple work, Hag. i. 2; so for the commonwealth, 1 Kings ix. 4-7, xi. 23-25, and xii. 7, 19.

Means of discerning fit time and manner: first, Inward light of the Spirit, and image of God, Isa. xxx. 21; Prov. iv. 18, 19; fear of God and love to man give much light, Prov. xxv. 12; 1 John ii. 10, 11. Secondly, Avoid self-confidence, Prov. iii. 5-7, and xxviii. 26. Thirdly, Consult with God; in fasting and prayer, Esther iv. 6, with v. 2; in his word, Ps. cxix. 24, 105; in the times and opportunities of providence, Ps. xxxii. 8; in the counsels of godly wise, 1 Kings xii. 7. Fourthly, Fit manner in all actions is, faith, Rom. xiv. 23, and love, 1 Cor. xvi. 13; for the end, God's glory, 1 Cor. x. 31, and the good of others, 1 Cor. x. 24.

Ver. 8. *There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.*

Amongst the inventions which Solomon's subjects found out to excuse themselves from dealing faithfully with him, when he fell to the toleration and

maintenance of idolatry, in building temples to his wives' idols, and endowing them with liberal maintenance, and in employing the hands and service of his subjects in such structures, this was the third, That where the word of a king is, there is power, (or dominion, or authority, ver. 4.) and that power is irresistible and uncontrollable: 'Who may say unto him, What doest thou?'

This invention or excuse Solomon taketh away, first, By the safety of obedience to God's commandment: 'Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil,' ver. 5. Secondly, By the discretion which a wise man hath, ver. 5, to observe fit time and judgment; for missing whereof great misery falleth upon men, ver. 6, 7. Thirdly, By the restraint of magistrates' power from reaching to a double object: 1. To restrain or constrain the spirit or conscience; 2. To discharge from death, which latter power—to discharge or deliver from death—he denieth also to all wickedness, (which men will not stick to commit, to prevent the king's wrath, which else might be as the messenger of death, Prov. xvi. 14.) ver. 8. Fourthly, By the wise man's observation of one man's rule sometime over another for hurt, ver. 9.

Power. Here is a word of the same notation with that ver. 4, implying authority and dominion, whence *Sultan*. There is not a man that hath dominion over the spirit.

Spirit. It is not here meant the soul, to retain it in the body; for, 1. That is expressed in the next part of the verse. Neither is there power or dominion—to wit, in a king—in the day of death to discharge a subject in that war. 2. The verb translated to *retain*, is rather to compel, to restrain, or constrain, and properly signifieth *coercere*; as David called his son by Abigail by a name from this root, Chileab, 2 Sam. iii. 3, because of his mother's restraint of him from shedding blood: whence also כָּלַף בֵּית, a *prison*, 2 Kings xvii. 4. To retain the soul in the body is wont to be expressed in another phrase in that language, Ps. xxii. 29; but by spirit is here meant the conscience, as elsewhere often, Prov. xx. 27, and xviii. 14; Acts xx. 22.

Doct. There is not a man, no, not the king, that hath a coercive power over the conscience.

He cannot, 1. Constrain to sin forbidden of God, Dan. iii. 13-18, nor restrain from duty commanded

of God, Dan. vi. 7 to 22. 2. Bind conscience in things indifferent—that is, lay such a weight or burden upon a commandment of his own that it shall be a sin to the conscience to neglect it. If man's commandment could bind the conscience, then the commandments of men would be the doctrines of religion, against Mat. xv. 9. 3. By outward punishments compel a man to do against his conscience—to wit, he cannot, that is, he ought not, till conscience be convinced, and then it is self-condemned.

Reason 1. From the immediate subjection of conscience to God; for, first, There God only writeth his law, Rom. ii. 15; secondly, God only can discern, judge, and punish sins against conscience: discern, Jer. xvii. 10; judge and punish, Job vi. 4; Luke xii. 4, 5; James iv. 12. Hence subjection of the conscience to man is flat idolatry.

Reason 2. From the immediate spiritual dominion of the conscience over the man, Rom. xiv. 5, 14, 23; Acts xx. 22.

Use 1. To resolve a great question of conscience, Whether a king or magistrate may compel men to profess and practise the religion established by law of his country?

Ans. First, For false religion. It is out of question; no, he sinneth in doing it, and the people in obeying it, 1 Kings xv. 30.

Secondly, For the true religion, as to worship the true God, the maker of heaven and earth, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we answer in six propositions.

Propos. 1. David and other godly kings of Israel did not force conquered pagan nations to worship the God of Israel, whether they lived in their own country or dwelt in the land of Israel. As in case a heathen proselyte came to join to the church of Israel, it was requisite he should circumcise his males, Exod. xii. 48, but not required that his wife should be of like religion with him, Num. xii. 1; the law in Ezra x. and Neh. xiii. concerning an Israelite marrying a pagan, and so Mal. ii. 11, not a heathen marrying a pagan before his conversion. It is not, therefore, a solid answer which some do give, that the kings of Israel are no precedents for Christian kings, partly because they were types of Christ, and because their land was typical and sacramental; for what they did as kings, heathen kings did the same lawfully. And the land of Israel did not for-

bid pagans to dwell in the land, as the Gibeonites and captives.

Propos. 2. Neither did the good kings of Israel, nor may Christian kings, compel any of their subjects to the fellowship of the church, to yield up themselves to their covenants, sacraments, and censures, unless they were fit for it and persuaded to it. This concerneth the second commandment, as the former did the first, Gen. ix. 27; Ps. cx. 3; Exod. xii. 48. If he will eat the passover, then let him first circumcise his males; else he may forbear both.

Propos. 3. It is not lawful for magistrates to suffer to live, first, Blasphemers of the true God, whether Christians or pagans, within their power, Dan. iii. 29, and vi. 26; 1 Kings xx. 23, 28, 42, whether in the land of Israel or out of it; yet Ahab no type of Christ. Secondly, Israelites or Christians apostate to idolatry, Deut. xvii. 2-7, in respect of their apostasy from the covenant, ver. 2. Thirdly, Witches, Exod. xxii. 18; Lev. xx. 27, with 22, 23. Fourthly, Seducers to idolatry, Deut. xiii. 1 to v. 11; and to heresy, Mat. v. 15; 2 Pet. ii. 1-3; Deut. xiii. 10; Zech. xiii. 3.

Obj. But is not this to punish a man for his conscience, and so to act contrary to the doctrine in hand?

Ans. It is not conscience that bindeth to these sins, but sinning against light of conscience. Blasphemers, apostates, witches, heretics, as *αἱρετικοὶ*, Titus iii. 10, 11. Paul hath tender respect of an ignorant, weak conscience, 1 Cor. iii. 7, 10, 11; not so of a hardened, 1 Tim. iv. 2. Such a conscience doth not extenuate, but aggravate sin, as being a punishment of sin against light and conscience.

Propos. 4. Magistrates may compel church members to observe church orders according to the word, and others not to disturb them, Ezra vii. 26, 27.

Propos. 5. Magistrates may compel all to hear the word of God, Acts iii. 22, 23; yet if men take exception at the calling, as being either too Romish, too near to Rome, or too far from it, let men be first convinced of the lawfulness to hear the word of God from any, Jer. xxviii. 1-6; 2 Chron. xxxv. 21, 22.

Propos. 6. No man can pretend conscience for atheism; for no nation is so barbarous, but is taken with conscience of a God.

Use 2. To inquire, How then do ministers and churches bind conscience? Ps. cxlix. 6, to Mat. xvi. 19, and xviii. 18.

Ans. Not by any injunctions of their own, but by ministerial declaring the commandments of God, and the Holy Ghost ratifying the same from Christ.

Use 3. To refute the popish and prelatical error of human laws binding conscience.

Use 4. To allow power to magistrates, where God alloweth it, Mat. xxii. 21; Rom. xiii. 7; hence give them honour, else their power is violated and taken away, Mat. vi. 4. 5. The former objection (before) may be propounded and resolved thus:

Obj. If blasphemers, idolaters, seducers to idolatry and heresy, be punishable even with death, then conscience is subject to coercive power.

Ans. Conscience is either natural, Rom. ii. 14, weak, 1 Cor. viii. 7, or seared, through the just judgment of God blinding the mind and conscience and hardening the heart, thereby to punish sin against conscience, or at least the not receiving of the truth with love, 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11; Rom. i. 28. Natural conscience is not to be strained, according to proposition 1. (*supra*); 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26; weak conscience is not to be despised, Rom. xiv. 3; seared conscience doth not extenuate but increase both sin and punishment, Isa. xlv. 20; 2 Thes. ii. 11, 12; Rom. i. 28, 32; especially after once or twice admonition, Titus iii. 10.

Doct. 2. It is neither in the power of the king, nor in the dexterity of the craft-masters of wickedness, to discharge a man of his warfare in the day of death, פְּעִל־רֶשֶׁע, are craft-masters of wickedness, Ps. xciv. 4, 16.

Reasons of the former: 1. From God's determinate appointment of our ends, Job xiv. 5; Acts xvii. 26.

Reason 2. From the preciousness of a man's life and soul—greater than any man can give to God, Ps. xlix. 7–9.

Reason 3. From the impotency of princes to deliver and discharge themselves from the war and stroke of death, Ps. xxiii. 29.

Reason of the latter, from the wages and desert of sin, Rom. vi. 23.

Use 1. To teach us there is a warfare between a man and death, 1 Cor. xv. 26, 54; as appeareth,

first, From the resemblance between death and war, in the effects. In death, as in war, we conflict *de summa rerum*, about all our chiefest worldly comforts, goods, lands, honours, pleasures, wife, children, liberty, life. In death, as in war, greatest violence is offered to us, and we use against it all our strength, Job ii. 4; 1. Of nature; 2. Of art, diet, and physic. Death, as war, conquering, carrieth captive to the prison of the grave, and many to hell, if death be not overcome; death feedeth on them, Ps. xlix. 14. Secondly, From the causes of this war: our earnest desire to preserve ourselves, John xxi. 18; 2 Cor. v. 4; whence death by philosophers was counted, τὴν φροσύνην φροσύνατον, as most contrary and destructive to nature. Again, sin, which brought in death, Rom. v. 12, addeth a venomous sting to it, 1 Cor. xv. 56, whence, to a carnal heart, God's wrath, fear of hell, Satan's outrage, horror of conscience. Whence we are to learn, first, To prepare for this warfare; there is no avoiding it; profane confidence will not avail us, Isa. xxviii. 14, 15.

Means or preparation against death: 1. Death to sin, Rom. vi. 8, 9; 2. Death to the world, Gal. vi. 14; 1 Cor. vii. 29–31, and xv. 30, 31; 3. Faith in Christ, Job xiii. 15; 2 Tim. i. 12; Ps. xlix. 1, 2, 5, 15; 4. Walking with God, as Enoch, Gen. v. 24, with Heb. xi. 5. Enoch's privilege is thus far communicated to all such as walk with God, that, though they escape not death, yet the bitterness of death, Prov. xi. 4, 19, and xii. 28. Such leave their souls to God with a quiet heart, their bodies to the grave with good report, and a blessed covenant behind them to their posterity; thus death will be our advantage, Phil. i. 21. Secondly, To abhor all self-murder, as not from human nature, but from Satan. For even corrupt nature desireth to preserve itself.

Use 2. To teach us not to do evil at princes' commands, nor to refuse to do good for fear of their displeasure, for they cannot deliver us from death; this is Solomon's scope.

Use 3. To teach us to serve such a master, as to whom alone it belongeth to save from death, Rev. i. 18; Ps. lxxviii. 20.

Ver. 9. All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: there is a

time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt.

Coherence, see in ver. 8. The words contain a fourth refutation of the third invention, mentioned ver. 4. As who should say. Where the word of the king is, there is power; but know withal, that where this power is always obeyed, at all times submitted to, this power or rule (for it is the same word with that, ver. 4) will be hurtful and pernicious to him that obeyeth it: There is a time when one ruleth over another for hurt to him. And this he proveth by his own diligent and serious observation and testimony: All this I have seen, and applied my heart, *נִתְּנָה אֶת לִבִּי*, or in applying my heart to the consideration of all things done under the sun.

Doct. 1. A penitent and prudent soul, that casteth his eyes about him, and considereth all things which are done under the sun, shall observe a time wherein that man that ruleth over another, ruleth over him for hurt to him. *אֲשֶׁר שִׁלַּט הָאָדָם בָּאָדָם לְרָעָה לוֹ*, translated one man; better, the man, whatsoever the man be; be it Solomon—he in his rule had a time wherein he set his people a-work to erect and adorn idols' temples, and this was the rent and ruin of the ten tribes, 1 Kings xi. 31, 33; 2 Kings xii. 28, 29, with xiv.—xvi.; their apostasy and captivity. Judah also followed the way of Israel to their apostasy and captivity also, 2 Kings xvii. 18, 19; so David before him, 2 Sam. xi. 4, 15, and xxiv. 1, 17; so Asa, 2 Chron. xvi. 10; so Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xviii. 1, with xxi. 3, 6, 8, 10; so Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx. 16–18; so Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxv. 22.

Reason 1. From God's good pleasure to leave every child of his at some time or other to some spiritual desertion, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. Wherein God's counsel is, first, To make us feel our need of Christ, Isa. xxxviii. 14; a soul oppressed crieth out for an undertaker or surety. Secondly, To make us like unto Christ, Luke xxii. 53; yet with this difference, he being sifted, no chaff or dross was found in him, John xiv. 30; not so we, Luke xxii. 31, 32. Thirdly, To make us know what is in our hearts, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, especially self-exalting, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25; Ps. xxx. 6, 7; and to heal it, 2 Cor. xii. 7; Gen. xxxii. 25. Fourthly, To chasten the people's sin, who might idolise their rulers, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1; Lam. iv. 20.

Reason 2. From the power of corrupt nature, which, though subdued to grace, will sometimes break the yoke, as Esau did Jacob's yoke, Gen. xxvii. 40.

Use 1. To teach magistrates a holy and humble jealousy over themselves, and watchfulness also over themselves and one another. (The application of this to our present governor, see in the schedule annexed.¹)

Use 2. To teach the people not to swallow down all the commandments of their rulers, lest sometimes they should rule you to evil; this is Solomon's scope here, Acts iv. 19; Micah vi. 16; Hosea v. 11.

Use 3. To provoke people to pray for their magistrates, that Christ would keep them in that time of trial.

Ver. 10. *And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity.*

This verse doth depend upon the former, by way of prevention of an objection—thus, if one rule over another to his hurt, the hurt will as well redound to him that ruleth as to them that are ruled. Wicked rulers often come to an untimely end, yea, want burial, Eccles. iii. 6; 1 Kings xiv. 11, xvi. 4, and xxi. 23, 24; 2 Kings ix. 33, 34; and infamy follows them after death, 1 Kings xv. 30. Whereto Solomon answereth, and by his own experience confirmeth it, It is not always so; I have seen a time wherein one ruleth over another to his hurt—that is, to the hurt of him that is ruled, to wit of the subject, not so of the ruler—and in so doing, that is, in ruling wickedly to the hurt of others, I have seen the wicked buried who had come and gone from the place of the holy; I have seen also the wicked forgotten in the city wherein they have so done, that is, had so wickedly ruled: this is also vanity. This increaseth vanity amongst men, and aggravateth the vanity of the condition of the sons of men.

Doct. 1. The place or seat of judgment is the place of the holy One.

For he speaketh here of wicked rulers, whom he describeth to have been conversant in the judgment-seat—in a Hebrew phrase, they had come and gone from the place of the holy; holy, in the singular

¹ To an American edition, I presume; not reproduced in the English edition, from which this is printed.—Ed.

number, that is, of the holy One. The holy One is God, Isa. lvii. 15. The place of the holy One is heaven, Isa. lxvi. 1; the temple, Acts xxi. 28; the throne or seat of judgment, Ps. lxxxii. 1; the humble heart, Isa. lvii. 15. The third is here meant; for he speaketh of kings, ver. 4, and of them as wicked, ver. 9. 10.

Reason 1. From God's ordinance thereof, Rom. iii. 1, 2.

Reason 2. From his presence there, Ps. lxxxii. 2; Prov. xxix. 26; 2 Chron. xix. 6.

Reason 3. From his ends there chiefly to be attended, 2 Chron. xix. 6.

Use. To teach magistrates to put off carnal affections, as shoes were put off by Moses, when we come to the judgment-seat, Exod. iii. 5; the like was done by Joshua, chap. v. 15.

Doct. 2. When a wicked ruler findeth a burial, and the memory of his wicked rule is buried with him, it is a vanity; or himself findeth a funeral, and his wicked rule no memorable obloquy.

When wicked rulers come to an untimely end, and their tyranny meeteth with just obloquy, it doth not a little avail, first, To the honour of God, Exod. xiv. 17, and xv. 1; secondly, To the edification and warning of men; Sennacherib in Herodot.; so Virgil's Mezentius: *Discite Justitiam*. For want of this Belshazzar was reprov'd, Dan. v. 29, &c. But yet it sometimes cometh to pass they do meet with burial, and no infamy upon their names, partly by the power of their successors, their children, and partly by a worse succeeding in their room.

Reason of the vanity of this: 1. It is an occasion of great growth of wickedness, ver. 11; for, first, The subjects comply with wicked rulers, if they meet with no great calamity in their life or death; secondly, Other wicked princes presume to do the like upon their wicked examples, indemnity, and impunity, ver. 11.

Reason 2. It is a fruit of the curse brought upon the civil state through the fall of our first parents, otherwise all evil should befall evil ones, and all good good ones.

Reason 3. It is no advantage to wicked princes, so buried and so forgotten; for the less check they meet withal here, the more they shall meet withal hereafter, Eccles. v. 8.

Use 1. To teach us to give honour to God, and to take warning to ourselves when we see God calling princes to account, Ps. lxxvi. 12, and cvii. 40; Job xii. 21, &c.

Use 2. To teach princes and rulers to rule in the fear of God righteously, 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, so they may expect comely burial and honourable memorial, 2 Chron. xvi. 14, xxiv. 16, xxxii. 33, and xxxv. 24. Not so others, 2 Chron. xxi. 19, &c., and xxxiii. 20; Jer. xxii. 18, 19.

Use 3. To teach all men, even private men, to do well in our generations; for if God recompense princes, surely he will not spare meaner persons, Prov. x. 7; Ps. cxii. 6.

Ver. 11. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Doct. 1. Sentence is not so soon executed as passed against an evil work, Zeph. ii. 2. When an evil work is done, sentence passeth speedily, Zech. v. 1-4; a flying roll, to imply swiftness, Mal. iii. 5; Gen. iv. 7. Sin lieth at the door, as a sergeant or jailer, to watch and keep and dog him wheresoever he goeth. No sinner but goeth up and down with his keeper, Ps. xxxvii. 13, and ix. 16; 2 Pet. ii. 1, 3.

The sentence is passed speedily, first, In God's counsel, Micah ii. 3; Jer. xviii. 11; secondly, In the curse of God's law, Gen. ii. 17; Gal. iii. 10; thirdly, In the conscience of the sinner oftentimes, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10, like the sentence written on the wall of the house, Dan. v. 5; fourthly, In the preparation of the causes to conviction and execution, to wit, in the causes, one link draweth another. By David's adultery with Bathsheba a spirit of uncleanness got into his house; hence Amnon defileth Tamar, she was Absalom's sister, and that draweth Absalom to revenge; Absalom's beauty draweth on the king to pardon him; Bathsheba's father being Eliam, 2 Sam. xi. 3, and Eliam being the son of Ahithophel, 2 Sam. xxiii. 34, turned off Ahithophel from David to Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 31, yet is not executed speedily, Gen. vi. 3; Num. xiv. 33; 1 Kings xxi. 29.

Quest. But why should the Lord be pleased to delay execution, seeing many evils grow upon it? as, first, It obscureth God's justice; the punishment

of a sin coming so long after seemeth rather a calamity than a just judgment of this or that sin ; secondly, God's providence is hence called into question, Ps. lxxiii. 11, 12 ; Mal. ii. 17 ; thirdly, Among men, the good are discouraged, Ps. lxxiii. 12-14, and the wicked are hardened, as in the text.

To these objections may be answered, first, God can clear his justice in his own time, and in his own way, by suitableness of the judgment, Judges i. 7, and remorse of conscience, Gen. xlii. 21 ; secondly, God will in every age clear his providence by some remarkable judgment, Ps. ix. 16, and lviii. 10, 11 ; thirdly, Good men must judge of things by the word, not by present events, Ps. lxxiii. 17. If some men be hardened, it is that God aimed at for their incorrigibleness, Isa. i. 5, or for the wickedness of their fathers, Hosea iv. 14.

Reason of delay: 1. Meet it is God should shew his patience as well as his justice, Exod. xxxiv. 6 ; Ps. cxlv. 8. Slow to anger, good to all, especially having placed the government of the world in the hand of a mediator, Exod. xxxiii. 2, 3. Secondly, To lead on some to repentance, Rom. ii. 4 ; 2 Pet. iii. 9, 15 ; 1 Tim. i. 16. Thirdly, To reward humiliation, though not sincere, 1 Kings xxi. 29 ; 2 Chron. xii. 6, 7. Fourthly, To give way to others to fulfil the measure of their sins, Gen. xv. 16, and so to make way for the treasuring up and shewing forth his power and wrath, Rom. ii. 5 ; Deut. xxxii. 34, 35.

Doct. 2. The delay of punishment upon sin filleth the heart of sinners to do evil.

Filleth them, first, With resolution to sin, Jer. xlv. 16, 17, and with boldness, Isa. iii. 9 ; secondly, With custom in sin, Jer. xiii. 23 ; thirdly, With skill in sin, Jer. xiv. 22.

Reason 1. From the depraving of their judgments by this means ; either to think, first, There is no God, Ps. xiv. 1, or at least that he regardeth not things below ; secondly, That God is like themselves, Ps. l. 21 ; thirdly, That such and such evils are no sin.

Reason 2. From the depravation of our wills by impunity, not to fear God, Ps. lv. 19.

Use 1. To take notice of the venomous corruption of our nature, that can suck such poison out of such a sweet attribute as the patience of God.

Use 2. To beware of such an abuse.

Use 3. To exhort us to be more filled with forwardness to good, and hatred of evil ; first, By the judgments of God against sin ; secondly, By the mercies of God to the godly.

Use 4. To teach courts and churches, neither of them to be too slow in executing sentence against evil-doers.

Ver. 12. *Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him :*

Ver. 13. *But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow ; because he feareth not before God.*

In the former verse Solomon declared the abuse which wicked men make of God's patience, and of man's also : because sentence is not executed speedily against an evil work, the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. In these words he giveth an antidote against this abuse, taken from his own knowledge and certain observation of the good estate of them that fear God, and the evil estate of the wicked.

The good estate of the godly he amplifieth, first, By the diverse events : though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his punishment be prolonged, yet it shall be well with them that fear God. Secondly, By the contrary estate of the wicked : it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days ; the brevity whereof is amplified by the simile of a shadow. Thirdly, By the cause of this their different estate : because the one feared before the face of God, the other doth not fear before God. Fourthly, By an argument from Solomon's own testimony thereof, and that not out of conjecture, but out of his own certain knowledge.

Doct. 1. Howsoever a wicked man may sin oft and escape long, yet a godly-wise man may fully assure himself and others that it shall go well with them that fear God ; but neither well nor long with the wicked.

Sin oft. The text saith an hundred times—a certain number of multitude for an uncertain. לֹא כִּי־יִרְדָּה is not *And his days be prolonged*. Days is not in the sentence ; and that is denied in the next verse, 'He shall not prolong his days.' But the meaning is, And a prolonging be to him—to wit, of

execution of sentence, if punishment be long delayed, and so he long escapeth.

Yet surely I know. And so a godly-wise man may know and assure himself and others, 'that it shall be well with them that fear God.'

Quest. Why doth he not rather say, that it shall not be well with the wicked? That would make the opposition more direct.

Ans. First, Because many times the long continuance of the wicked in their sinful course with impunity is a punishment and hardship to the godly: Saul's reign is David's banishment; Ahab's reign is Micaiah's imprisonment, 1 Kings xxii. 27. Secondly, Because the godly are apt to stumble at the sight of the impunity and prosperity of the wicked, compared with their own straits, Ps. lxxiii. 1; Jer. xii. 1; and the godly must first have cordials before the wicked receive their corrosives: Mat. xxiv. 34, 41; Isa. iii. 10, 11; Prov. xi. 31; Ps. lv. 23; Job xv. 31, &c.

Quest. How or wherein doth it appear that, notwithstanding the long patience of God to wicked men, yet certainly it shall go well with the godly, but neither well nor long with the wicked?

Ans. First, In that it is a pledge of greater mercy reserved for them that fear God, the more that God prolongeth his patience and long-sufferings to wicked men, Rom. ix. 22, 23. Secondly, In that this long patience of God to the wicked is an evidence of greater wrath prepared and treasured up for them, Rom. ii. 4, 5. Thirdly, In that there is a speedy shortening of the rage of the wicked over the godly, Ps. cxxv. 3. Fourthly, In that the days of the wicked are always cut off suddenly, before the time either of their expectation, or at least of their preparation, Amos viii. 9. The sun shall go down at noon implieth partly a great change and immediate from height to depth, Ps. xcii. 7, and partly a sudden change, before the business and the day be half finished.

Reason. From the fear of God in the godly, and the want of the fear of God in the wicked. This reason is expressly given in the text: 'It shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him,' ver. 12. 'It shall be evil with the wicked, because he feareth not before God,' ver. 13.

Before God. The Hebrew is, Before the face of God—that is, before, first, His presence in his ordin-

ances, Ps. cv. 14; secondly, His presence in his providence, Prov. v. 21; Ps. cxix. 168, and xxxiv. 16.

Fear of God. First, In holy reverence of his great and glorious majesty and goodness, Ps. cxxx. 4; Hosea iii. 5; secondly, In humble sense of our great weakness and unworthiness, Phil. ii. 12, 13; thirdly, In awful shunning to displease him, Prov. xvi. 6.

Use 1. To restrain us from quarrelling at God's providence, because it may sometimes seem to go worse with God's people than with the wicked, Jer. xii. 1. Say it confidently, and it shall go well with the godly, Ps. lxxiii. 1; not so to the wicked.

Use 2. To take heed of abusing God's patience unto hardness of heart in sin.

Use 3. To support the spirit of such as fear God in the midst of the prosperity of the wicked, and in the midst of their own afflictions.

Use 4. To teach us the fear of God; fear before his face, his ordinances, and his providences. It is a certain presage of good success, 2 Chron. xx. 3, 12, 15, and xi. 12; it is an overcoming or denial of ourselves, which else being wanting would enfeeble us, 1 Sam. ii. 9; Judges vii. 2.

Ver. 14. *There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also is vanity.*

Ver. 15. *Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.*

In these verses, to the end of the twelfth verse of the ninth chapter, Solomon declareth and setteth forth another vanity which he observed in the world, the promiscuous successes and events that befall good men and bad, chiefly by the misgovernment of princes.

In this fourteenth verse he propoundeth one kind of it, 'That there be just men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; and on the contrary, there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous.'

This promiscuous event he amplifieth, first, By the adjunct vanity of it: there is a vanity done upon

the earth : I said this is also vanity—vanity ushereth it in, and waiteth upon it after, ver. 14 ; both are vanity, both that the just find according to the work of the wicked, and that the wicked find according to the work of the just. Secondly, By the effect it wrought in Solomon, which is the use he made of it, to commend mirth. And that he proveth, first, By the equality of the goodness hereof, the free and cheerful use of the good things of this life being equal to any other course which a man can take in such a cause ; secondly, By the permanency of this good with him as a sance to sweeten all his labour in the days of his life which God giveth him, ver. 15. The coherence of these words with the former is, that Solomon saw some wicked rulers honourably buried, the punishment of some offenders prolonged, and thereby to outward view it might appear that the estate of wicked men was better than the estate of the godly, save only that faith knoweth the contrary, ver. 10–13 ; he thereby taketh occasion to observe and set forth this vanity more distinctly and fully, the promiscuous estate and success of good and bad men in these, and in the following verses. The promiscuous events are of three sorts : first, That the good men fare as the evil should fare, and that evil fare as good should do, text. Secondly, That sometimes both fare alike. If good men fare well, so do the wicked ; if the wicked fare evil, so do the good, chap. ix. 1–10. Thirdly, That men of best ability and dexterity are disappointed of their hopes and means, ver. 11, 12.

Doct. 1. It is a vanity to be observed upon the earth, that sometimes it befalleth just men according to the work of the wicked, and it sometimes befalleth the wicked according to the work of the righteous, Luke xvi. 25 ; Ps. lxxiii. 12–14.

Reason 1. Through the wickedness or weakness of rulers in commonwealth and church, Ps. xii. 8 ; Isa. lix. 15 ; Mal. iii. 15 ; 2 Sam. xvi. 3, 4 ; Ezek. xiii. 22.

Reason 2. Through the wise providence of God, dispensing good things to the wicked, to lead them to repentance, Rom. ii. 4, or else to harden them in impenitency, Rom. ii. 5. Dispensing evil things to the righteous, first, For chastisement and mortification of sin, 1 Cor. xi. 32 ; secondly, For trial, Dan. xi. 35 ; Isa. xxvii. 9 ; thirdly, For our good at the

latter end, Deut. viii. 16 ; Heb. v. 8 ; Job xxiii. 10. All these three ends are coincident.

Reasons of vanity. There is a fourfold vanity in it : 1, Of uncomeliness, Prov. xi. 22, and xxvi. 1, 8.

Reason 2. Of unprofitableness ; the wicked make an ill use of it, Ps. lii. 19 ; so do the godly, Ps. lxxiii. 13, 14.

Reason 3. Vanity of uncertainty, Acts xx. 22, not knowing what shall befall me.

Reason 4. Of confusion, following the fall, and the condition of all earthly things after the fall, Rom. viii. 20 ; not that there is any vanity in God's administration of itself—all his acts are wisdom and righteousness—but, first, In men it is a sinful vanity ; to wit, of unprofitableness in the sufferers, and of folly in the doers of it—viz., in such as exalt the wicked, and discourage the good. Secondly, In other creatures, I mean in the disposal of them in this manner, it is a penal vanity.

Use for the wicked, Not to account themselves righteous, though it happen to them according to the work of the righteous. Either thence learn to repent, Rom. ii. 4, or look for wrath upon wrath, ver. 5. This use is gathered from the verse before the text, Eccles. viii. 13.

Use for godly men, To commend mirth to a godly heart, as here Solomon doth : 'Then I commended mirth,' or joy, ver. 15 ; that is, first, A free use of the creatures, meat, drink, and the like, ver. 15, and chap. ix. 7–9 ; secondly, Contentment in a man's estate ; thirdly, Delight therein.

Reason 1. If it fare well with us, it is better with us than many other just men.

Reason 2. It abideth with us or cleaveth to us of our labour ; it is the result of our labour through mercy.

Reason 3. Joy is as oil to the wheels ; it strengtheneth us to all the duties of our calling, or maketh them easy, Neh. viii. 10.

Reason 4. If it go ill with us, yet we have convenience, yea, much more than we deserve, Gen. xxxii. 10 ; Lam. iii. 20 ; and mourning for crosses doth more hurt than good, 2 Cor. vii. 10.

Obj. But ought not a man to be humbled under crosses ?

Ans. 1. Yes ; but when we have been humbled,

then bear all cheerfully and thankfully, 1 Sam. i. 7, 18; 2 Sam. xii. 20-24; 2 Cor. xii. 7-9. Abandon, therefore, sullenness and discontentment under crosses. 2. To follow diligent labour in our calling. It is that whereto joy and mirth is joined; the same word with that, Gen. xxix. 34; Eccles. v. 12. 3. To reckon our lives by days, as the wise man here doth, Ps. xc. 12; Gen. xlvii. 9. It will help us, first, Not to promise ourselves multitudes of years, Ps. xc. 5; secondly, To prepare to give account for each day, Ps. xxxix. 12; thirdly, To improve and make use of present opportunity, Heb. iii. 15; fourthly, To forecast provision for the day, Mat. vi. 11. 4. To look at every day as a new gift of God, text, ver. 15.

Ver. 16. *When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes.)*

Ver. 17. *Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun; because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.*

In the two former verses Solomon observed it as a great vanity, the promiscuous event and estate that befell good men and bad, especially through the misgovernment of princes. In these two verses he observeth the like promiscuous event and estate of both good and bad from the work and providence of God; which various dispensation of all events alike to all sorts of men, good and bad, Solomon here setteth forth by the adjunct thereof, his own serious meditation and study, and inquiry after the reason of it, after the wisdom and counsel of God's proceeding in it, which study and meditation of his he enlargeth and amplieth in these verses, and in the former part of the next chapter. In these verses by two adjuncts: first, By the restlessness and assiduity of it, so as he found no rest nor sleep night nor day to seek out this matter, ver. 16. Secondly, By the fruitlessness of it, he could not find what he sought; which he setteth forth by a double amplification, *a diversis*: 1. Of labour in searching—though a man labour in seeking it out; 2. Of wisdom—yea, if a wise man think and purpose, and

profess to seek it and to find it out, and to know it, yet shall he not be able to attain it, ver. 17.

Doct. 1. A man that shall apply his heart to search and discern the wisdom of God in his work and dealing with the righteous and with the wicked, though himself be wise and his labour great to find it out, yet his labour shall be fruitless, and himself restless. He speaketh here of the wisdom of God in his work and dealing with the righteous and with the wicked, both alike, as appeareth by the verse before, ver. 15, and the verses following, chap. ix. 1-3. His labour shall be fruitless, for he shall not find out what he sought for, ver. 17; and himself restless, as Solomon himself confesseth, (and he seemeth to speak it of himself,) there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes, Ps. lxxiii. 16; Jer. xii. 1, 2; Hab. i. 13-15; Job ix. 10-12.

Reasons why fruitless: 1. From God's concealment many times of the causes and reasons of the afflictions of his people, especially in the beginning of their troubles till towards the end. Job was long before he saw the reason of God's strange hand upon himself, Job x. 2-7; and it is a great part of their affliction that they cannot discern the reason of God's dealing with them. God concealeth his mind till we have learned to prefer his wisdom and will above our own. When Job stooped to this, Job xl. 2-5, with xlii. 5, 6, then he not only saw a gracious issue, but the cause of all his troubles, from God's conference with Satan.

Reason 2. From the power of God to have brought to pass any ends of his own and ours in dealing bountifully with the godly, and justly with the wicked, if it had pleased him. Though sanctified affliction be wholesome to the godly, yet God was able to have humbled and healed them without such outward crosses and afflictions. The spirit of grace could do it effectually by the word. That God chooseth rather to do it by afflictions, what man can find the reason? Or if some reason might be rendered in regard of our fellowship with the first Adam in sin and vanity, and with the second Adam in afflictions, yet why might not God have chosen rather to afflict the godly in the inner man, than in the outward man? and why might not the wicked have undergone greater afflictions in this world?

Reason 3. From the free choice which God maketh of some men, both of the good and of the bad, to deal well with some of both sorts, and to deal sharply with others of both sorts, Job xxi. 23-25.

Reasons why restless: 1. From the disproportion between the faculty and the object. The wisdom of God in these ways of his providence is beyond our reach; and therefore, as when the members of the body are reached and stretched beyond their compass, it chaseth away all sleep and rest; so when the mind is set upon the rack by such transcendent meditations, it rendeth the soul with vexation and restless disquietness.

Reason 2. From the force of earnest intension of the mind in difficult and abstruse studies, to waste and scatter those cool and moist vapours which rise from the stomach to cool the brain, and would stop the passage of the animal spirit to the senses, and so procure sleep. For the animal spirits of the brain, being heated with agitation and study, do also heat those vapours, and so attenuate and disperse and spend them that they cannot stop the passage of the spirits to the senses, and so sleep is chased away. This is a natural cause, which is the more aggravated by the hand of God taking away natural rest from such as cannot rest satisfied in His will, unless they may be of his counsel, Job xxxiii. 13.

Use 1. To teach us to content ourselves in seeking out by our own wisdom the counsel of God in his dealing with ourselves or others; but by faith and patience to wait for a good issue. Faith, first, Seeth God's hand in all, and sanctifieth the name of his sovereignty; he is the potter, we the clay; wisdom, Job ix. 4, righteousness, Jer. xii. 1, grace to his people, and faithfulness, Ps. cxix. 75. Secondly, Stirreth up to prayer for a profitable use of all, Ps. cxliii. 10. Thirdly, Humbles us under the mighty hand of God, 1 Pet. v. 6. Fourthly, Directeth us to the word for further counsel, Ps. lxxiii. 17.

Use 2. To confine our evening meditations to matters within our compass. Evening meditations should rather be devotional than scholastical, to beat our brain will leave it without fruit or rest.

Use 3. To acknowledge it, as Solomon here doth penitentially, as a vanity in ourselves, that we have sought to find out God's work and wisdom by our own wisdom.

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1. *For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them.*

Ver. 2. *All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.*

In the two last verses of the former chapter Solomon set forth his serious inquisition after the reason and wisdom and counsel of God in ordering the like promiscuous events to the righteous and to the wicked; and he sets it forth by a twofold adjunct: 1. The restlessness of himself in it; he saw no sleep with his eyes, ver. 16. 2. The fruitlessness of it; he could not find it, though a wise man and labouring to find it, chap. viii. 17.

In these two verses he setteth forth the same inquisition by the effect it wrought in him, the giving of his heart to declare all this, to wit, that followeth,—viz., to declare four observations, which he had found out touching this matter: first, That the righteous, and the wise, and their works are in the hand of God, ver. 1. Secondly, That no man can know the love or hatred of God to themselves or others by any outward events, ver. 1, or by all that is before them, before their eyes, obvious to them. Thirdly, That all things come alike to all sorts of all, which he expresseth by a distribution of the subject, ver. 2, to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and that sacrificeth not; to the good, and to the sinner; to him that sweareth, and to him that feareth an oath. Fourthly, That this is an evil among all things done under the sun, ver. 3.

Doct. 1. That which a man giveth his heart to seek and to find of all the ways of God, so far as he hath found it, he should also give his heart to declare it. Solomon told us, in ver. 16 of the former chapter, he set his heart with much labour to seek the reason, and wisdom, and counsel of God in the promiscuous events that befall the sons of men. That which he sought he found not; but what upon

search he did find, he here telleth us he set his heart upon it to declare it, Job v. 27; Eccles. vii. 25-29.

Reason 1. From the end of all God's works, whether of creation or providence. It is that they may be known, and that God may be known in them, Ps. cvii. 43, lxxviii. 4-7, and cxi. 4; no man can remember what he knoweth not, Joel i. 4.

Reason 2. From the end of all our knowledge of God, which is (this for one of them) to tell it to others, Eccles. xii. 9; 1 Cor. xii. 7. No light is to be put under a bushel, Mat. v. 15. All knowledge is light; talents not to be buried.

Use 1. To teach us not to be sparing this way; what we have searched and learned in any kind of good knowledge, the more ready to be to communicate it, Job v. 27, and xv. 17, 18.

Use 2. To teach us to inquire and search knowledge; younger persons from the more aged, to give them occasion to declare what they have searched out, Job viii. 8-10; Prov. xx. 5. A seasonable question is here a good bucket.

Doct. 2. The righteous, the wise, and their works are in the hand of God, ver. 1,—that is, first, He is the disposer of them after his own will; they are in his power and pleasure to order one way or other; so the phrase taken, Gen. xvi. 6, and xxxi. 29; Job i. 12, and ii. 6. Secondly, He reserveth the knowledge of them, and of the disposal of them, to himself; so the phrase also taken, Acts i. 7. Both these meanings are here pertinent, Ps. xxxi. 15; Jer. x. 23; Prov. xx. 24.

Reason 1. From God's absolute sovereignty over the creatures, Jer. xviii. 6. As being the cause: first, The efficient, procreant, and conservant; secondly, The final cause of them all, Rom. xi. 36.

Reason 2. From the precious esteem and regard which God hath of his righteous servants and their ways, Isa. xliii. 2, 4; Ps. i. 6.

Reason 3. From the righteous men's recommendation of themselves and their ways into the hand of God, Ps. xxxvii. 5; 2 Tim. i. 12. These also wisely consider and observe how God keepeth and guideth them, Ps. cvii. 43.

Reason 4. From the wicked man's slighting and despising his own way, Prov. xix. 16. As he that regardeth not to choose his way, but goeth through thick and thin, he despiseth his way; so he that

careth not whether his way be pure or filthy. These three last reasons shew why the righteous and their ways are more expressly said to be in the hand of God, than wicked men and their ways be, though the ways of the wicked are in God's hand also, Isa. xlv. 1, x. 5, 6, and xxxvii. 29; Ps. cxxv. 5.

Use 1. For comfort to the righteous. If we and our ways be in the hand of God, where can they be safer? there let us rest. And therefore also in all estates to be the more contentful, Ps. xxxix. 9, thankful, Job i. 21, and fruitful; and so to grow the more humbled in sinful failings, and the more enlarged in faith on God in well-doing. It might humble a good heart, that himself fell into any sin; but the more that God in displeasure gave him up to it, Isa. lxiii. 17. In well-doing it is a comfort to have done well, but much greater that God helped us, 1 Chron. xxix. 10, 14.

Use 2. To instruct us to be wise as well as righteous, in not trusting to our own power and will, for both are in God's hand, Prov. iii. 5, 6; James iv. 13-15.

Use 3. To abase wicked men, whom God doth not vouchsafe to carry in his hand, neither them nor their works.

Doct. 3. No man can certainly discern the love or hatred of God to himself or others, by their outward events and estates.

No man knoweth. Knowledge is *certi axiomatis judicium*. If no man knoweth, then no man certainly discerneth.

Love or hatred—to wit, of God; for of God he spake in the words next before: 'The righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hands of God.'

To himself or others; for if he discern not the love or hatred of God to himself, much less to others; and if he could discern it to himself, he might to others; and if to others, he might discern it to himself; for outward things are alike discernible in both.

By all that is before them—that is, by all things lying open to their outward senses, as prosperous or adverse estates and events, Mat. vi. 19, 20. If a man might know the love of God to him by outward things, those outward things would be as treasure to him, which Christ denieth.

Reason 1. From the corruption and changeable-

ness of outward things, Mat. vi. 19, and therefore they cannot be certain evidences of an unchangeable and uncorruptible estate.

Reason 2. From the like events and successes and estates to all, Eccles. ix. 2. Good name to Demetrius, 3 John 12. as well as to the false prophets, Luke vi. 26. Wealth to the rich epicure, Luke xii. 16, as well as to Abraham, Gen. xxiv. 35, and to Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 12. Pleasure to the wicked, Job xxi. 11, 12, as well as to the godly, Eccles. ii. 10. Health and strength to epicures, Ps. lxxiii. 4, as well as to Caleb, Joshua xiv. 11. Beauty to Absalom and such, 2 Sam. xiv. 25; Prov. xi. 22, as well as to Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel. Long life to Ishmael, Gen. xxv. 17, as well as to Isaac, Gen. xxxv. 28. Learning and wisdom to the Egyptians, Acts vii. 23, as well as to Moses and Daniel, Acts vii. 22; Dan. i. 17. Crosses to bastards, Ps. lxxviii. 33, as well as to sons, Ps. lxxiii. 14; Heb. xii. 8. Sickness to the disobedient, Deut. xxviii. 59, 60, as well as to David, Ps. xli. 8. Poverty to Job's scorers, Job xxx. 3, as well as to Lazarus, Luke xvi. 20. Sudden death to the disobedient, Ps. lv. 23; Prov. xxix. 1, as well as to Jeroboam's good son, 1 Kings xiv. 12, 13. Violent death; Jonathan died in the field, and by the hand of the uncircumcised, as well as Saul, 1 Sam. xxxi. 1, 2.

Reason 3. From the curse and vanity that lieth upon all the creatures by the fall, Gen. iii. 17. It is a bondage to the creature to minister to the wicked, not to minister to the godly, Rom. viii. 20, 21. This is the reason of the former reason.

Obj. Did not Cain know God's acceptance of Abel above himself, by an outward sign of fire from heaven, or the like? Gen. iv. 4, 5.

Ans. That was a miraculous event, as was also the fire that fell upon Elias's sacrifice, 1 Kings xviii. 38; but Solomon speaketh of ordinary common events.

Obj. 2. But is there not great difference of a godly man's bearing the events and estates that befall him, and a wicked man's bearing his?

Ans. Yes; but Solomon speaketh not of outward fruits, but outward events.

Obj. 3. Ps. xli. 11.

Ans. David knew not the favour of God from the outward deliverance, but from the grace of God

secretly revealed in it. So any benefits sprinkled with the blood of Christ may hold forth everlasting mercies, Ps. cxxxvi. 23-25.

Use 1. Against papists: first, Then outward prosperity is no outward sign of the church, though Bellarmine make it his fifteenth note, *De Notis Ecclesie*, lib. iv. cap. 18. Secondly, Who abuse this place from the corrupt vulgar Latin translation, to undermine and destroy the assurance of faith of the love of God to a faithful soul, against evident Scripture, 1 John iii. 14, &c.; 1 Cor. ii. 12; Rom. viii. 16; 2 Pet. i. 10. It is a whorish church that bringeth not up her children to know their father.

Use 2. To teach us to judge wisely of the chastisements of the godly, not to misconstrue God's meaning in them to ourselves, or others lying under them, Ps. xli. 1-3. This misjudging was the sin of Job's friends, for which God's wrath was kindled, Job xlii. 7.

Use 3. To warn wicked men neither to bless themselves in their prosperity, as if that were a sign of God's favour, Zech. xi. 5; nor in their adversity to promise to themselves impunity in another world, because they have their punishment in this world.

Use 4. To exhort to look at things within us, and from us, for the knowledge of God's love to us. Within us: 1. The testimony of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 16; 1 John iii. 24; 2. The gifts of the Spirit accompanying salvation, Acts xvi. 30, 31; 1 John xiv. 18, 19. From us: our election of God to be our God, Ps. lxxiii. 25.

Doct. 4. All the sons of men are ranked into two sorts, righteous or wicked, good men or sinners, clean or unclean, Mal. iii. 18; 1 John v. 19.

Reason 1. From God's eternal purpose to make all the vessels of the house of the world either to honour or dishonour, Rom. ix. 21.

Reason 2. From the different original root of all men, either flesh or spirit, John iii. 6.

Reason 3. From the two different ways that all men take, Mat. vii. 13, 14; 1 John iii. 7, 8.

Reason 4. From the largeness of the two covenants, dividing all men between them, Gal. iii. 10, and iv. 24, &c.; Rom. vi. 14, &c., and viii. 1, 5.

Reason 5. From the integrity of the whole man, required in God's service; which being wanting,

men serve the devil, Mat. vi. 24; Acts xxvi. 18; Col. i. 13.

Use 1. Against purgatory; for presuppose the truth of the doctrine, and there be but two places for these two sorts, to be bestowed in after this life, Mat. xxv. 32, &c.

Use 2. To try what our estate is; every one of us belongeth either to one of these sorts, or to the other.

Marks of difference, besides the former difference mentioned in the reasons: 1. What people do we belong to? to such we are gathered after death, Num. xx. 24; Gen. xxv. 17; 2. Where is all a man's delight, Ps. xvi. 3, xxvi. 5, and cxxxix. 21, 22, and communion, Ps. exx. 5; thither shall he be gathered after death; and not with the contrary, Ps. xxvi. 9. If we delight in men for righteousness sake, then the more righteous they be, the more we delight in them, Ps. xvi. 3.

Doct. 5. All the righteous in the world are also good and clean, offering sacrifices and fearing oaths; and all the wicked are also unclean, sinners, negligent sacrificers, and fearless swearers.

Good, as, first, Filled with good treasure, Mat. xii. 35; secondly, Bringeth forth good fruit, Mat. vii. 18, and so fitted for good uses, 2 Tim. ii. 21; not so the wicked, Mat. xii. 35; Tit. i. 16.

Clean, first, By imputation of the righteousness of Christ, Ezek. xxxvi. 25; secondly, By sanctification of the Spirit, Isa. xliii. 3; Ps. lxxiii. 1. The wicked are neither, Mat. vii. 23. The sinner erreth, first, From the rule or way, Ps. xiv. 3; secondly, From the mark or end, Prov. xvi. 25.

Sacrificing, as, first, Observing God's statute-worship, Ps. cxix. 5; secondly, Setting their hearts and delight and cost upon it, 1 Chron. xxix. 3, and xxi. 24; Gen. iv. 4.

This the wicked either neglect altogether, 2 Chron. xv. 3; Ps. cxix. 155, or perform perfunctorily, Mal. i. 7, &c.

The righteous fear an oath, first, As not daring to take it in vain; secondly, As observing it religiously, when taken, Joshua ix. 19; 2 Sam. ix. 1; not so the wicked, Hosea iv. 2; Jer. xxiii. 10; Ezek. xvii. 18, 19.

Use. For trial of our estates, whether we be righteous or wicked, by these fruits.

Ver. 3. *This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea also, the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.*

Ver. 4. *For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.*

Ver. 5. *For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.*

Ver. 6. *Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.*

The fourth thing that Solomon observed, and thought it meet to declare from the promiscuous events of all alike unto all, is the evil of it, especially the evil effect of it, in the hearts of the sons of men. Coherence, see in ver. 1, 2.

Doct. Amongst all the evils that are done under the sun, this equality of events to all sorts of men alike, it filleth the hearts of men with evil and madness, all their lifetime, even to their death, ver. 3; as who should say, This maketh them live an ill life, and die an ill death; yea, live madly, and die madly. Moses and Aaron were as well excluded from Canaan, as the unbelieving and murmuring Israelites. Josias was as well slain by an arrow in battle against his enemies, as Ahab. Nebuchadnezzar is said to have lived forty years in a victorious reign, as well as David. See many more such like instances in ver. 1, Doct. 3.

This is an evil, first, Afflictive, both to good men, Ps. lxxii. 21, and to evil men, Ps. cxii. 10; secondly, Corruptive; it filleth the hearts of men with, first, Evil of wickedness or sin; secondly, Madness, ver. 3.

First, Evil of sin. The ground of this evil imagination springeth occasionally from these promiscuous events, as conceiving they flow from the not guidance of them by providence: 1. Evil imaginations in particular, that the basest life here is better than the best life hereafter, confirmed by a proverb, 'A living dog is better than a dead lion,' ver. 4. And this they hold forth in four instances: first, In stay and provision of supply: the living have something to trust unto, see the Hebrew, ver. 4; the dead

have neither friends, nor money, nor strength, &c. Secondly, In knowledge even of some future things: the living know that they shall die; the dead know nothing at all, ver. 5. Thirdly, In rewards: the dead have no more a reward, no, not so much as a memorial of their good deeds, whilst they lived, ver. 5; but the living meet with some reward here, Eccles. iv. 9; Esther vi. 3, 10; Ezek. xxix. 19. Fourthly, In the enjoyment of the objects of their affections, ver. 6; their love, and their hatred, and envy is now perished, viz., they have neither affections nor objects of them left, nor any portion in things here below, beyond which they look not, ver. 6. Hence the most famous of the heathens have preferred the meanest life on earth above all the hopes they had of another world. Homer reporteth of his Achilles, he had rather be a servant to a poor country clown here, than to be a king to all the souls departed; so Mæcenas in Seneca had rather live in many diseases than die. It is another evil imagination, to think God like wicked men—to wit, in liking well of them, Ps. l. 21. 2. Evil resolutions, Eccles. viii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 32; Isa. lvi. 12. 3. Evil speeches and practices, Isa. x. 11; Job iii. 1, &c. Men's hearts are also said to be filled with madness as well as with wickedness, by occasion of like events to all, in that they break forth, first, To outrageous violence in sin, Ps. lxxiii. 5, 6; secondly, To foolish, vainglorious boasting in sin. The Hebrew word cometh of a root that signifieth to praise or glory, Isa. iii. 9. And filled they be with wickedness and madness from this occasion, all their lifetime, even to death, Job xxi. 13; Ps. lv. 19.

Use 1. To shew a great difference between the righteous and the wicked. The hope of the wicked is only in this life, ver. 4, Job viii. 13, 14; but the righteous hath his chief hope and trust in another, 1 Cor. xv. 19; Prov. xiv. 32. The wicked had rather live a dog's life here, than hazard his estate in another world. If he hasten his death, it is through Satan's efficiency; the righteous longeth for dissolution, Phil. i. 23. The wicked knoweth little of any future thing, but that he shall die, ver. 5; the godly knoweth that when he dieth, he shall see God, shall be like him, &c., Job xix. 25-27; 1 John iii. 2. The wicked shall have reward in everlasting

fire, Ps. ix. 17, but at best themselves look for none; the godly shall have a reward in eternal glory, Isa. xlix. 4. The wicked shall never exercise their love any more after this life, nor shall ever meet with anything lovely, ver. 6; though they shall not employ their hatred or envy about earthly things here, yet they shall both hate God, and envy the happiness of his saints; but the righteous shall abound in love to God, and in God's love to them, Ps. xvi. 11. We shall abound also in mutual love to all the saints and angels; the greatest strangers there will love us better than our best friends here, Ps. xvii. 15. Our hatred will not be wanting against Satan and wicked persecutors, Rev. vi. 10; our zeal also shall then abound, (that which is here translated envy, signifieth also zeal, Isa. xxxvii. 32.) The wicked have no portion but in this life, Ps. xvii. 14; the portion of our inheritance is after this life, 1 Pet. i. 4, 5.

Use 2. Not to misconstrue God's dealings with ourselves or others. It is a root of atheism, and will make us worse than the devils; for they believe there is a God, and tremble, James ii. 19.

Use 3. To teach us not to rest in a carnal condition. It leaveth us without knowledge, without reward, and without portion.

Ver. 7. *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.*

Ver. 8. *Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.*

Ver. 9. *Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.*

Ver. 10. *Whosoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.*

Solomon having in the former verses declared four observations which he gathered from God's dispensing like events to all, he now giveth some practical directions from the same ground: first, That a man should take all the good which the providence of God putteth into his hand, ver. 7-9; secondly, That

he should do all the good which God putteth into his hand to do, ver. 10.

1. The good which he directeth a man to take is in the enjoyment of the comfortable use of all the blessings which God giveth him in this life; which blessings are chiefly five: first, Meat or bread, it to be eaten with joy, ver. 7; secondly, Wine, it to be drunken with a cheerful heart, ver. 7; thirdly, Garments, and they to be always white; fourthly, Ointments, and they not to be lacking to the head, ver. 8; fifthly, The wife beloved, and she to be joyfully lived withal, all the days of thy vanity, ver. 9.

Reason 1. From God's acceptance of our work, ver. 7.

Reason 2. From the portion allotted to us of God, ver. 9, especially in the joyful fellowship of his wife.

2. The good that we are in any way able to do, he exhorteth to do by a reason from the vacancy and cessation of all employment and business of mind and hand in the grave; and the grave described by our adjunct act, or walking to it, ver. 10. Solomon here speaketh, not in the person of an epicure, but in the name of the Holy Ghost.

Reason 1. From the like speeches in the like sense spoken often before in his own person, chap. ii. 24, iii. 12, 13, 22, v. 18, 19, and viii. 15.

Reason 2. Epicures are not wont to speak so religiously, first, Of life as vanity, which Solomon here doth feelingly, ver. 9; secondly, Of the days of our life as God's gift, ver. 9; thirdly, Of the course of our life as a journey to the grave, ver. 10; fourthly, Of our love to our wives, and fellowship with them constantly, avoiding strange lusts, ver. 9.

Obj. But garments always white, and wife always joyed in, it seemeth to deny fasts at any time.

Ans. Solomon speaketh not of extraordinary times and duties, but of ordinary course.

Doct. 1. The uncertainty of outward events calleth all men to take all the good, and to do all the good that God putteth into their hands all the days of their life. Of the former part now, Eccles. iii. 12, 13, 22, and v. 18, 19; Acts ii. 46, and xiv. 17, *a minore*, yet it holdeth in heathens also, Ps. civ. 15. The Jews in cheerfulness used white garments, Luke xiv. 19; Prov. v. 19, for joyful love of wife. Times of humiliation are not ordinary, so also times of apostasy are excepted, Hosea ix. 1.

Reasons of the former part of the doctrine: 1.

from the contrary walking of wicked men, fretting and vexing themselves with the promiscuous dispensation of outward events, and filling their hearts with wickedness and madness upon that occasion, ver. 3-6.

Reason 2. From God's acceptance of our work herein. It is acceptable to God that we should use cheerfully what God giveth freely and cheerfully, Ps. cxlv. 16; Deut. xxvi. 14; for, first, It is an improvement and use of the creature to that end God gave them, Ps. civ. 15, and so a fulfilling of one part of the third commandment. Secondly, The contrary is weariness to God, not to accept and use the gifts he offereth, Isa. vii. 10-13. In which respects not only godly men, but all men are bound to cheerful acceptance of God's goodness, without sadness and mourning.

Reason 3. From the portion which God giveth us in this life for our outward man, as his grace for the inner man, 2 Cor. xii. 9: first, It is God's gift and admeasurement, Eccles. v. 18; his talents are to be employed. Secondly, It is our substance, supplying our wants and losses, Acts xx. 24; he is a poor man in the midst of abundance that wanteth this, Eccles. v. 19, 20. Thirdly, It is that by occupying of which we increase our estates, Neh. ix. 15. In special manner this to be a man's portion, is attributed to a man's joyful life with his wife, ver. 7. As who should say, The best portion a man can have with a wife, is a joyful life with her all his days, as if he had no portion without this, whatsoever wealth, or friends, or beauty, or parts he had with her. Without this joyfulness with her, it were no portion at all, Prov. x. 18. It is a portion, first, As given of God, Eccles. v. 19; Prov. xix. 14; secondly, For a stay and support of his life, Gen. ii. 18; thirdly, To employ for his further advantage, Prov. xxxi. 11, 12.

Reason 4. From the wearisome vanity of this life, without making use of the comforts of it, ver. 9; Ps. lxxviii. 33. Vanity, first, Of brevity, Ps. xxxix. 5; secondly, Of vanity or emptiness, Ps. xxxix. 6; Isa. lv. 2; thirdly, Of disappointment or frustration, Isa. xlix. 4; fourthly, Corruption, Rom. viii. 20, 21.

Reason 5. From the necessary support of a man in his labours, ver. 9. This comfortable use of the creatures is as oil to the wheels, Neh. viii. 10.

Reason 6. From the gift of every day of our life to us from God's hand, ver. 9; Job xiv. 5; Ps. xxxi. 15; Acts xvii. 26; therefore every day some refreshing.

Use 1. To teach the children of God to take Solomon's counsel here; for to them it is chiefly given, whose work God accepteth, in seeking reconciliation with God, and fellowship in his Christ and kingdom, Mat. vi. 33; 1 Tim. iv. 3; Titus i. 15; Hosea ix. 1.

Rules to do it safely. Observe, first, Two rules of piety: prayer before, 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5, and thanksgiving after, Deut. viii. 10. Secondly, A rule of justice; thine own, not the bread of idleness, oppression, deceit, Prov. xxxi. 27, iv. 17, and xx. 17; 2 Kings iv. 7. Thirdly, A rule of sobriety, Luke xxi. 34. Fourthly, A rule of wisdom, 1. Regarding the end of meat and drink, which is strength and cheerfulness, Eccles. x. 17. Of apparel, is beside, (1.) Necessity; (2.) Comeliness; (3.) Adorning the inner man of the heart, 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. 2. Regarding future times and posterity, Prov. xxi. 20. 3. In frugality, saving remnants, John vi. 12. Fifthly, A rule of charity and mercy in ministering part to others that want necessities, Neh. viii. 10.

Use 2. To stir up Christian yoke-fellows especially to this duty.

Means. First, Uprightness of heart, Job xx. 5; secondly, Care of mutual pleasing, 1 Cor. vii. 33, 34.

Use 3. To take heed of grieving God's Spirit, which taketh such care for our refreshing, Eph. iv. 30.

Use 4. To stir up to a Christian state and course; it is not a way of melancholy, but seasonable cheerfulness.

Use 5. To teach us to look at this life as vanity, and all the days of it, and therefore to lay up an enduring substance in the life to come, Heb. x. 34, and patiently to bear many disappointments in this life.

Use 6. To look at every day as a gift from God, Lam. iii. 23, and therefore to employ it to his advantage.

Ver. 10. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor*

knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

The doctrine from this and the three former verses was this: That the uncertainty of outward events calleth all men to take all the good, and to do all the good that God putteth into their hands all the days of our life. Of the former part, to wit, of taking all the good, hath been spoken in the three former verses. It remains now to speak of doing all the good that God putteth into our hands all the days of our life.

'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do' implieth three things: first, That which falleth within our calling, or commission, or authority, as Gen. xvi. 6. Unlawful things, or things lawful, but out of our calling, are not to be done though they be in our hand, Micah ii. 1. Secondly, That which falleth within the compass of our power and ability, as the phrase is used, Gen. xxxi. 29; otherwise, though it be in our calling, yet having¹ power we may omit it, 2 Sam. iii. 39. Thirdly, That which God giveth us opportunity and occasion to do, as the phrase is used, 1 Sam. x. 7; Gal. vi. 10; Eccles. xi. 2, 6.

Reason 1. From the vacancy and cessation of all business in the grave, whither thou goest, as in the text.

No work, no performance, or accomplishment of any business, no device. The Hebrew word signifieth two things: first, A device or cunning engine, 2 Chron. xxvi. 15; secondly, An account, as Eccles. vii. 27. Both here meant, in the grave there is no ability or opportunity either to devise or invent any good, or to make up or cast up any accounts.

Nor knowledge to understand truth or falsehood, good or evil; nor wisdom to consider of any good ends, or of any good means leading thereto.

Reason 2. From the love which we owe to God, and the measure of it, which is with all our might, Deut. vi. 5.

Reason 3. From our stewardship, and God's lordship, of that which God putteth into our hands. The work is the Lord's as our sovereign master, 1 Cor. xvi. 10. Church work, Jer. xlviii. 10; warlike execution, 1 Sam. xiv. 45; wrought with God, Col. iii. 23, 24; servants' work; we are but factors for him. There is a heavy curse upon negligence in his work, Jer. xlviii. 10.

¹ Qu. "not having?"—Ed.

Use 1. To reprove, first, Inordinate walking without a calling, when the hand findeth nothing to do, Mat. xx. 6; secondly, Negligence in a calling, where the hand putteth not forth his might, Prov. x. 4.

Use 2. To exhort all men to a conscionable faithfulness and diligence in all the work their hand findeth to do. The three reasons in the text are as so many motives. Besides, first, Satan bestirreth himself busily, and setteth all his instruments a-work to choke the work of reformation with store of tares. Secondly, The more improvement of our talents here, the greater will our reward be in heaven, Luke xix. 16-19; yea, it will ashame us to receive such a plenteous recompense of reward for so small service. There will be rest enough in the grave, Isa. lvii. 2, and recompense enough in heaven, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Thirdly, The hands of our fellow-labourers faint in England, what through multitude of variety of work, and what through mists and fogs of temptation about them, Neh. iv. 14.

Use 3. To teach men to finish and perfect their accounts with God and man here, for there is no perfecting accounts in the grave, Luke xvi. 2.

Use 4. To look at the whole course of our lives as a journey to the grave. Whether we go to work, or to meat, or to sea, or to church, or to law, or to field, to the grave we are going; which is a matter, first, Of admonition to carnal persons to hasten spiritual preparation; secondly, Of consolation to the godly, and warning also against security, Rom. xiii. 11.

Ver. 11. *I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.*

In the former chapter Solomon had observed this vanity, that it often befalleth the righteous according to the work of the wicked, and to the wicked according to the work of the righteous, ver. 14. This vanity Solomon hath amplified in the latter end of the former chapter, and in the former part of this chapter, by sundry arguments. Amongst other arguments he amplified it with this observation,

that all events fall alike to all, to the good and to the evil, clean and unclean, holy and profane. And lest it should be said that godliness or holiness and uncleanness make no great difference in men's actions, but as Rabshakeh said, wisdom and strength are for the war, Isa. xxxvi. 5, so events fall out, as wisdom and strength, swiftness or speed, skill or knowledge do direct them; Solomon here denieth that, and telleth us it is not in the power of the likeliest means to attain their ends, or to effect their work. And this he sheweth us in five instances; 1. The race is not to the swift; 2. The battle is not to the strong; 3. Bread is not to the wise; 4. Riches are not to men of understanding; 5. Favour, either of princes or people, is not to men of knowledge. And besides he proveth it, first, By a reason or cause thereof in God, taken from the overruling power of the higher cause or agent, God's disposing of time and chance; for, saith he, time, or chance, or occurrence cometh to all these. The word translated *chance* here, is translated *occurent* or *occurrence*, 1 Kings v. 4; secondly, By a reason or cause in man, his ignorance of his time; which is amplified by the calamity or misery following it, ver. 12.

Doct. 1. Men of the best abilities and sufficiencies for any work, do often meet with the like events and disappointments as they do that want them. Swiftest men and horses are ablest and most sufficient and most fit for the race; yet the race is not to the swift. Why then it is to them that want swiftness; it is to the slow. The strong are best able to win the battle, yet the battle is not to them; why then it is to the weak. Men of wisdom are most like to cast about for means of subsistence, for bread, Prov. xxi. 20, yet bread is not to the wise; and then it is to simple people. Men of understanding are most likely to attain riches; yet riches is not to them, but to shallower heads. Men of knowledge are most likely to win favour from high and low; yet favour is not to men of knowledge, but to ignorant men, Ps. xxxiii. 16, 17; Amos ii. 14-16; 1 Sam. xvii. 50; 2 Cor. xi. 27.

Reason 1. Because chance or occurrence cometh to all these, that is, some occurrence which God's providence casteth in by the way, that disappointeth all the most likely means and abilities. As the

stone that was cast out of David's sling, chanced by God's providence to fall and to sink into Goliath's forehead, 1 Sam. xvii. 49.

Reasons why God doth cast in such occurrences :

1. From his own sovereign prerogative in disposing of all events and effecting all works, Eph. iv. 11. To make a thing be is the act and name of Jehovah, which he will not communicate to the creature, Isa. xlii. 8; Lam. iii. 37; hence in a man's own strength no man prevaileth, 1 Sam. ii. 9.

Reason 2. From the creature's abuse of his talents : first, Either by confidence in them without God, Isa. x. 12-29. Ajax thought it was for cowards and weaklings to call upon God for succour, not for him; whence he was foiled; secondly, Or by arming them and using them against God, Amos ii. 12-16.

Reason 3. From the time that God hath set to all a man's success and changes. Time is sometime put for the variety of conditions and changes of good or evil that befall men, as Ps. xxxi. 15, so here. Now when these times or changes come, no means that the creature can use can prevail to withstand, Jer. xlv. 17.

Use 1. To discourage us from confidence and boasting in our gifts and parts, Jer. ix. 23, and xvii. 5, 6; 2 Chron. xxv. 8. God can easily disappoint us, first, Either by taking away our power to use our parts, Amos ii. 14, 15; secondly, Or by taking away our will to use them, 2 Sam. iii. 18, 21, 22; thirdly, Or by giving greater parts, at least for the present, to our adversaries, Isa. xxx. 16; fourthly, Or by casting in some casual event, 1 Kings xxii. 34; fifthly, Or by sending some unseen angels to cross us, and to help our adversaries, Joshua v. 13, 14. It is a like vanity to boast in our gifts and parts, ascribing our good success to them, after achievement of our ends and desires, as in confidence in them beforehand, Amos vi. 13; Ps. xlv. 3, 5-8.

Use 2. To prevent the discouragement of such as want gifts, and parts, or means, 2 Chron. xiv. 11; 2 Cor. xii. 9. It may moderate our fears in times of strong and formidable assaults against us, Isa. li. 12, 13. It is a forgetfulness of God to fear creatures. It may support us also in our weak provisions and strength against winter journeys, huge storms and tempests, &c., Ps. xlv. 1, 3, and xciii.

3, 4. The safety of mariners' and passengers' lives and estates lieth not on ropes or cables, anchors or ships, guns or weapons, but in the name and hand of the Lord; he swaddlETH and ruleth the sea, Job xxxviii. 9-11.

Use 3. To remove the vulgar conceit of fortune and chance out of this place. It is nothing but God's disposing of occasions and events, casual to us, but counsels to him; what is chance to others is the Lord to Job, chap. i. 21. Chances are as much in God's hand as times, Ps. xci. 10, and therefore to bear all chances that befall us, as befalling us from the wise hand and providence of the Lord.

Ver. 12. For man also knoweth not his time : as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare ; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

Solomon had said in the former verse that it is not in men to attain the ends which they are best furnished with sufficiency of abilities to attain, ver. 11.

A double reason or cause he giveth thereof: first, One in God; times and chances are in the hand of God, and he causeth them to fall upon men in all their ways, ver. 11; secondly, The other in man; his ignorance of his time, the time that he should take for every action, though he be fitted with ability to perform it, ver. 12. But this was formerly spoken to by Solomon in chap. viii. 6; therefore this verse may rather be taken as an amplification of the reason given in the former verse. There it was said, men are often disappointed because time and chance befall all their actions and affairs; and that he amplifieth by an argument of equals: Time also falleth upon man himself, and chance therewith; and this set forth by the adjunct ignorance of man of what times shall befall him; and that amplified by the misery which thereby falleth suddenly upon man; and that sudden misery is set forth by a twofold comparison: first, Of fishes taken in an evil net; secondly, Of birds taken in a snare.

Doct. The sons of men are commonly ignorant and uncertain of the times that do befall them, Gen. xxvii. 2; Acts xx. 22; James iv. 14; Prov. xxvii. 1; Eccles. xi. 2, 6.

Reason 1. From the Lord's pleasure to reserve this as a sovereign prerogative in his own power, Acts i. 7.

Reason 2. To train up his servants to a child-like dependence on God's will, James iv. 14, 15; also to a watchful preparation for sudden changes, Mark xiii. 35, 36; Luke xii. 35-40; likewise to fruitfulness in doing all the good we can find to do for the present, Eccles. ix. 10, and xi. 2, 6; besides, to the obedience of faith, and to follow God blindfold. Foreknowledge of cross events hindereth obedience, Jonah iv. 2; foreknowledge of good events maketh obedience mercenary, as John vi. 26.

Reason 3. To surprise wicked men with sudden judgments, as birds in an evil snare, and fishes in a net, Ps. xxxvii. 13, and lxxiii. 18, 19; Dan. v. 5, 6.

Use 1. For a sad warning to wicked men not to continue in such an estate; they know not what shall befall them, what times shall come upon them; but what evil doth come will be sudden calamity, Job xxi. 13; 1 Thes. v. 2, 3.

Use 2. To reprove the vanity and impiety of such as consult with witches about the events of things, and the times that should come over them. What got Saul by the Witch of Endor, or Haman by sorcery, or Balak by Balaam?

Use 3. To learn us a holy use of our ignorance of our times, according to God's ends mentioned in the second reason.

Ver. 13. *This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me.*

Ver. 14. *There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it.*

Ver. 15. *Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.*

Ver. 16. *Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.*

Ver. 17. *The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.*

Ver. 18. *Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.*

Solomon having observed in ver. 11 that the

battle is not to the strong, bread is not to the wise, in these two verses he giveth an instance of the disappointment of great strength, by such a subject as was least able to resist it, to wit, by weak means in a weak subject, and of the neglect of such a wise man. The weak subject is, first, A little city; secondly, Few men in it. The great strength against it: first, There came a great king against it; secondly, He besieged it; thirdly, He built great bulwarks against it, ver. 14. The weak means; a poor wise man found in the city, and by his wisdom delivered the city, ver. 15; which act of the poor man is amplified by the slender requital of that poor man, expressed in an argument *a diversis*, 'yet no man remembered that poor man,' ver. 15. All which passages Solomon setteth forth, first, By the adjunct wisdom, great wisdom, which he observed in it, ver. 13; secondly, By the wise observations which he gathered from it, first, That wisdom is better than strength; secondly, That a poor man's wisdom is neglected, ver. 16; thirdly, That the words of the wise are more heard in quiet than the cry of a ruler among fools, ver. 17; fourthly, That wisdom is better than weapons of war; fifthly, That one sinner destroyeth much good, ver. 18.

Doct. It is a matter of much wisdom, or a matter affording much wisdom to the observers of it, a little city of small strength, and few inhabitants, besieged by a great king with strong bulwarks, to be preserved and delivered by one poor man, and yet the poor man to be neglected. So Abel, in Beth-maachah, by a wise woman, 2 Sam. xx. 15, &c.; Samaria, by Elisha, 2 Kings vii. 1, &c.; Jerusalem, by Isaiah, 2 Kings xix. 2, &c.; Thebes, by Epaminondas; Lampsacum, from Alexander the Great, by Anaximenes; Syracuse, by Archimedes, from Marcellus; Alexandria, by Anatolius, from the Roman forces. See Valer. Max. lib. vii. c. 3; Euseb. lib. vii. c. 26.

Reasons of this power of wisdom: first, God's pleasure to magnify and exalt gifts of mind above gifts of body, as the soul itself is more excellent than the body, Prov. xxi. 22; Eccles. vii. 19; secondly, From the wisdom of spiritual wisdom, to intrust God with the cause of the city itself, 2 Chron. xx. 12, 15; Prov. xviii. 10, and xxx. 26.

Reason of neglect of the wise poor: first, the envy of the rich; secondly, The conceit of his want of

means to get any wisdom but by some chance happening on a good course, Mat. xiii. 54, 55 ; thirdly, From the vanity incident to all the good things of man by the fall, Eccles. i. 2 ; fourthly, From the wisdom of God to prevent a poor wise man's pride.

Use 1. To teach wise men to observe the greater wisdom in the greater passages of human affairs by weaker means, ver. 13. Where God soweth much, we should reap the more.

Use 2. To teach us wisdom is better than strength or weapons of war, ver. 16, 18.

Use 3. To observe the neglected condition of a poor wise man, ver. 15, 16.

Use 4. To observe a time of silence and quietness, wherein to utter words of wisdom.

Use 5. To teach us that as one poor wise man may do his country much good, so may a sinner by his wickedness do his country much hurt, ver. 18. Achan did much hurt, Joshua vii. 11, 12 ; Jonah also, though a good man, yet erring out of the way, and wandering in sin, Jonah i. 11.

Reason. From the contagion of sin, 1 Cor. v. 6. The troublers of Israel are the sinners in Zion, 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18.

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1. Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour : so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.

Solomon having shewed the vanity incident to the wisdom of a poor man—to wit, first, To be neglected, not heard ; secondly, If heard, and followed, yet to be forgotten, chap. ix. 15, 16. In this verse he sheweth the vanity incident to the wise man, who is also honourable, to a man in reputation for wisdom and honour, which is, to be blemished with a little folly, and that little folly to be like a dead fly corrupting a precious box of ointment. So this little folly to corrupt and blemish the excellency of wisdom in an honourable person.

In the text three things are compared with three : first, A man of reputation for wisdom and honour with the precious ointment of an apothecary ; secondly, A little folly with a dead fly ; thirdly, The evil which a little folly doth to such a wise, honourable

man, with the evil which a dead fly doth to precious ointment, which is double : שׂוֹבֵר, causeth it to putrify, שׂוֹבֵר, causeth it to send forth a putrified savour.

Doct. As an honourable wise man is like an apothecary's precious ointment, and a little folly like to a dead fly ; so is the corruption which a dead fly causeth in that ointment like the hurt which a little folly doth to an honourable wise man.

The apothecary's precious ointment excelleth, first, In quality, as odour, John xii. 3, performing a whole house, Cant. i. 3, and colour, Ps. civ. 15 ; secondly, In manner of skilful confection ; thirdly, In efficacy or virtue, for healing and refreshing, Prov. xxvii. 9. So doth the wisdom of an honourable wise man excel, first, In odour ; it sendeth a sweet perfume all the country over, 1 Kings iii. 28 ; secondly, In colour, causing the face to shine like an ointment, Eccles. viii. 1 ; Acts vi. 15 ; thirdly, In manner of skilful confection ; fourthly, In efficacy and virtue, Prov. xxvii. 9.

A little folly is like a dead fly ; like, first, In quantity ; both little. Secondly, In quality ; both of them, 1. Base and contemptible ; 2. Unprofitable ; 3. Noisome and troublesome, Ps. lxxviii. 45 ; Exod. viii. 24. A living fly is no better ; a dead fly baser, (as in alike, Eccles. ix.) As a dead fly causeth a precious ointment to putrify, and to send forth an evil savour, so doth a little folly corrupt and dishonour an honourable wise man.

Pineda marvelled how a dead fly should so much corrupt a precious ointment, seeing he found it not so in his country. But there is a difference, first, Of flies, which in eastern countries are many of them more venomous and noisome, Ps. lxxviii. 45 ; secondly, Of ointments, which in those countries are more pure and precious, which in ours are more gross and greasy ; they anointed their heads and faces, Mat. vi. 17 ; Eccles. ix. 7.

Solomon's folly in loving strange women corrupted his spirit to take them as wives and concubines ; then to tolerate their religion ; then to adorn it with countenance of goodly temples, and with maintenance of priests and sacrifices. Whence the mount Olivet, on which their temples were built, was called the mountain of corruption, 2 Kings xxiii. 13 ; yea, it corrupted all Israel and Judah.

A pang of folly in David so weakened his reputation, as offended all Israel with the savour of it, and caused a great rebellion against him.

A little folly in Asa banishing the prophet, in Jehoshaphat making affinity with Ahab, in Uzziah offering incense, in Hezekiah shewing his treasures, in Josiah going to war against Pharaoh-Necho, corrupted and dishonoured the government of them all.

Reason 1. From a more observable defilement of the most pure and precious things, as in the purest clear linen the smallest spot is soon espied.

Reason 2. From the vanity which God seeth it meet the best gifts and parts should be stained withal, Isa. xxiii. 9.

Use 1. To exhort men of place and honour to seek after wisdom ; both together maketh them as precious ointment. Folly in dignity is a great deformity, Eccles. x. 6 ; Prov. xxvi. 1, 8.

Use 2. To teach wise men not to bear with themselves in little follies, much less in great.

Use 3. To teach wise and honourable men to make account of an hour and power of temptation, and to deny and suspect themselves, that God may be pleased to keep them from falling shamefully.

Ver. 2. *A wise man's heart is at his right hand ; but a fool's heart at his left.*

Ver. 3. *Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.*

These words prevent an objection which might arise from the former.

Obj. If the wisdom of the poor and of the rich are subject to such vanities, (as have been shewed in the end of the former chapter, and in the beginning of this,) then where is the excellency of wisdom above folly ?

Ans. In two things : first, In placing of the heart. The heart of the wise is at his right hand ; of the fool at his left, ver. 2 ; secondly, In the failing of a fool's heart in his ordinary course and way, and thereby bewraying himself openly to be a fool, ver. 3.

Doct. 1. There is a great difference between a wise man and a fool, in the placing and carrying of their hearts. It is not to be thought there is any observable difference in the heart of a wise man and of a

fool, for then some anatomists would have observed it ; but the heart is put metonymically for the mind, judgment, and will of a man ; and the right and left hand are put metaphorically. The meaning is, first, A wise man doth not aim at sinister ends in his work, Mat. vi. 3 ; he aimeth sincerely at the glory of God, and the good of himself and others. A foolish pharisee, Christ calleth them so, Mat. xxiii. 17, 19, he doth all to be seen of men, Mat. vi. 2, 5, 16 ; 2 Kings x. 16, or for some selfish end or other. Secondly, A wise man carrieth his thoughts and works with strength and dexterity. As the right hand is counted stronger than the left, so what is wrought with strength is attributed to the right hand, Ps. cxviii. 15, 16, and cxviii. 1. Thirdly, A wise man may be said to have his heart at his right hand, in that he taketh all things in the fairest and best sense from God or man, Ps. cxix. 75 ; Mat. i. 19 ; on the contrary, a fool makes a sinister construction of that which is well meant from God or man, 2 Sam. x. 2, 3 ; Eccles. viii. 11 ; Ps. l. 21 ; Rom. ii. 4, 5. Fourthly, The right hand is a place of pre-eminence and blessing, Gen. xlviii. 14, 17-19 ; in which respect a wise man taketh ways of preferment to highest honour before the Most High, Prov. xv. 24, and x. 20, 21, and xii. 26 ; Mat. xxv. 33. And for carrying on their hearts in their course of life, there is great difference between the wise and the fool. The fool, in his ordinary and daily course of life, which, in ver. 3, is called his way, his heart faileth him, and faileth him so far that he expresseth and discovereth his folly openly to all that observe him. Not that Solomon here speaketh of a natural fool, that, as he walketh in the streets, discovereth to all that he is a fool by his looks and gesture ; Solomon seldom or never speaketh of them in all his writings. But he speaketh of a carnal, wicked man, destitute both of spiritual wisdom, and wisdom fit for his calling ; and the words may, according to the text, be translated, ' Yea also, as he that is a fool walketh in his way, his heart faileth him, and he saith to all men he is a fool,' Ps. xxxvi. 1 ; 2 Tim. iii. 9 ; 1 Tim. v. 24, 25.

Reason 1. From the deep deceitfulness and weakness of the heart, unless the Lord dwell in it, strengthen it, keep it, and guide it, Jer. xvii. 9. God is the strength of the godly, wise man's heart,

Ps. lxxiii. 26. But in a hypocrite, much more in an open wicked man, his heart is empty at his best; and being empty, Satan will soon repossess him, and hurry him to open offences and miscarriages, Mat. xii. 44, 45.

Reason 2. From the failing of the heart the way will be openly vain and foolish and wicked, text.

Use 1. To teach us not to neglect wisdom, though a poor man's wisdom be despised, and he forgotten, and an honourable man's wisdom is corrupted with some dead and stinking fly, some time or other. For though this be true, yet there is great pre-eminence in a wise man above a fool, as both these verses shew.

Use 2. For trial of a wise man and a foolish, according to the different placing of a man's heart on his right hand or left. (This to be amplified according to the estate of the present auditory.)

Use 3. To teach us not to trust in our own hearts; we are then fools, Prov. xxviii. 26. Our hearts are empty naturally; and empty hearts will fail us and proclaim our folly. It is good to have our hearts filled with Christ, with his Spirit, and with his grace, Eph. iii. 17; Heb. xiii. 9.

Ver. 4. *If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.*

Solomon having observed, that one dead fly and one little strain of folly staineth the reputation and honour of wise men of high place, he proceedeth in the rest of this chapter to declare what those dead flies or vanities be in particular throughout this chapter. But to prevent disloyal thoughts, which thereupon might arise in the heart or carriage of subjects towards their governors, he hedgeth in his discourse with a twofold direction and instruction of loyalty: 1. One in the beginning of his discourse, ver. 4; 2. The other in the end of it, ver. 20.

Parts of the verse: 1. A direction to a right and loyal carriage of a man's self in case the spirit of the ruler rise up against a man; if so, yet leave not thy place. 2. A reason of it, from the benefit of a better course; for yielding pacifieth great offences.

Doct. 1. The rising of the spirit of a prince against a subject, doth not give leave to a subject to leave his place, but calleth him rather to lay down his spirit. The spirit of a prince is not a sudden pas-

sion, but a habitual bent of displeasure; (for spirit is a habitual bent, Prov. xviii. 14; Num. v. 14.) His place is not meant of place of habitation chiefly, for in times of deep and bitter displeasure it is lawful to leave the country, 1 Kings xix. 1-3, &c.; John iv. 1, 3. Nor the place of a man's office, if the office be civil, and such as a man may lay down and leave without sin against God, but detriment to himself; for if the leaving of a man's civil office may prevent the danger of his life, it were better laid down with safety than kept with displeasure and peril. But by place is meant the relation of a subject, his loyalty, 1 Sam. xxiv. 4, and xxvi. 11. *Place* is by the Septuagint translated *τάξιν*, Job xxxviii. 12.

Reason 1. From the ground and foundation of authority and subjection between prince and people, which is, first, An ordinance of God, Rom. xiii. 1, 2; secondly, The covenant of the people confirmed by the oath of God between them, Eccles. viii. 2; 2 Sam. v. 3; 2 Kings xi. 17. Until therefore the body of the people do find such great cause of complaint of their ruler as to have broken the fundamental articles of their covenant, the ruler's transgression of his course and duty to the subject is no cause of discharge of the subject's duty to him.

Reason 2. From the benefit and efficacy of yielding; it pacifieth great wrath; text. Yielding in soft answers, Prov. xv. 1, and in actual submission to his will, Prov. xxv. 15.

Use 1. To teach us not to rise up in our spirits against rulers, if they should rise up against us. It is not lawful for us to leave our place of subjection and loyalty, which dissolveth the relation or the exercise of it. Which argueth it is not lawful for servants to run from their masters, for therein they dissolve their relations, Gen. xvi. 6, &c.; 1 Pet. ii. 18, &c., unless there be peril of life or limb to the servant.

Quest. Whether may it be lawful for a state to rise against their king or ruler?

Ans. First, Not for every injury to the state, which may stand with the safety of it; secondly, In atrocious evils they may oppose him, 1 Sam. xiv. 44, 45, and xxii. 17; thirdly, Tyrants *sine Titulo*, they may depose, as Athaliah, 2 Kings xi. 12, 16; fourthly, Subverters of the safety of the state, they

are first by all gentle means to reduce and heal. If all other remedies be hopeless, they may *Curare, ne quid respublica detrimenti capiat.*

Use 2. To quiet and subject our hearts to a holy yielding unto God in all afflictions, Ps. cxix. 75 ; 1 Sam. iii. 18 ; 2 Kings xx. 19.

Ver. 5. *There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler.*

Ver. 6. *Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich set in low place.*

Ver. 7. *I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.*

In these verses Solomon noteth the first of those dead flies which putrify the reputation and wisdom of princes, and that is the misemployment of their favours and honours. Where,

First, The men advanced are : 1. Fools, yea, folly itself ; 2. Poor men, in opposition to rich ; 3. Servants. Those debased are, 1. Wise, in opposition to fools ; 2. Rich not only in outward estate, but in parts and gifts fit for government ; 3. Princes.

Secondly, The misemployment or misplacing is, 1. Folly in great dignity, rich in low place ; 2. Princes walking as servants, servants riding on horseback like princes.

Thirdly, The cause of this ; the face or countenance of the prince to the one, against the other.

Fourthly, The vanity of it ; it is, 1. An error ; 2. An evil error.

Doct. 1. It is an error, and an evil error, that proceedeth from the face of a ruler, the advancement of mean and weak men, and the debasement of able and noble persons. Doeg an Edomite advanced, 1 Sam. xxii. 9 ; Haman an Amalekite, Esther iii. 1.

Reason of this error : first, Fellowship of princes in their education with vain persons, 1 Kings xii. 8. It was a great error in Solomon to make no better choice of his son's school-fellows and play-fellows ; secondly, Princes' indulgent respect to servants brought up under them, Prov. xxix. 21 ; thirdly, The servitude of some princes to their passions and lusts, and the serviceableness of some base men to princes herein ; so Doeg to Saul's cruelty and enmity against David and the priests, 1 Sam. xxii. 9, &c.

Reason of the evil of the error : first, It is uncomely, Prov. xix. 10, and xxvi. 1 ; as if the weak

and uncomely members of the body should be set in highest place, open to view. Secondly, It is burdensome to the whole estate of a commonwealth, the rule of a servant, Prov. xxx. 21, 22.

Reason of the proceeding of this error from the face of the ruler ; from the efficacy of the king's face in the advancement or debasement of persons about him. It is not the desert of an unworthy person that honoureth him, but only the king's countenance, Prov. xvi. 15.

Use 1. To teach men to prevent this error by choosing for their children good companions, as much as may be, at school, at play.

Use 2. To teach our people here, whose government is elective, to make choice of men of greatest worth for wisdom, for sufficiency, for birth.

Use 3. To look at it as more safe for the commonwealth to put the eminency of honour and power rather in the hand of the magistracy than in the commonalty.

Use 4. To teach us to prefer God and his ways above ourselves and our wills. He is the prince of princes, our wisdom is folly.

Ver. 8. *He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it ; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.*

Ver. 9. *Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith ; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.*

Ver. 10. *If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength.*

In these verses Solomon reckoneth up in pithy and proverbial speeches and parables other dead flies found in princes and statesmen, though otherwise in reputation for their wisdom and honour. The former verses declared the first dead fly, the misemployment of princes' favours and honours, ver. 8, 9, 10. The second is the digging of a pit for innocent and well deserving men to fall into, an unusual practice in statesmen, but dangerous ; otherwise digging of a pit for a wicked guilty man to fall into is safe, 1 Kings ii. 36-46. The third is breaking a hedge—that is, some defence set about church or commonwealth, whether counsel, laws, or guard of military men, ver. 8. Fourthly, Removing stones—that is, massy and unwieldy persons, as Zech. xii. 3. Fifthly, Cleaving of wood—that is, making division between persons firmly and closely compacted, ver.

9. Sixthly, Blunt affronts put upon people by a weak arm ; it is as striking with blunt iron, without much strength put to, ver. 10. To help this he directeth to the use of wisdom, which is profitable to direct, to set an edge upon business, ver. 10.

Doct. 1. The digging of a pit, the breaking of a hedge, the removing of stones, the cleaving of wood, and blunt affronts upon the people by a weak arm, are all of them dead flies usually found in statesmen, but always dangerous.

The digging of a pit, to wit, for an innocent or well-deserving man to fall into, Ps. vii. 15. So Saul plotted against David, 1 Sam. xviii. 17, but fell into that pit himself, 1 Sam. xxxi. 3, 6. So Haman prepared a gallows for Mordecai, but was hanged on it himself, Esther vii. 9, 10.

The breaking of a hedge is the violating of some defence set for the guard or safety of a people or state, as a hedge is set about a pasture of cattle. Such a hedge, dangerous to be broken, are laws and liberties, Jer. xxxiv. 11–17 ; counsellors and parliaments, 1 Kings xii. 13 ; and faithful and valiant guard of military men, 1 Sam. xviii. 13, and xix. 1.

Removing of stones, that is, of massy and unwieldy persons, 1 Sam. xix. 11, and xviii. 13 ; Prov. xxvi. 27 ; Zech. xii. 3.

Cleaving of wood, making divisions between persons firmly and closely compacted, may soon endanger him that doth it.

Blunt iron, the edge not whetted, requireth more strength ; and if strength be wanting, the blunt stroke or affront is dangerous, 1 Kings xii. 13, 14.

Reason 1. Of their falling into a pit that dig it, from God's righteousness and wisdom to take the wily in their own craftiness, Job v. 12, 13 ; Prov. iii. 29.

Reason 2. Of a serpent's biting them that break the hedge, from God's establishment of ancient bounds, Prov. xxiii. 10, 11, and from the old serpent's power when men go out of their calling, as in our callings angels guard us, Ps. xci. 11, 12.

Reason 3. Of hurt by removing stones ; it is a tempting of God to presume beyond our strength.

Reason 4. Of hurt by cleaving wood, from God's hatred of sowing discord, Prov. vi. 16, 19.

Reason 5. Of hurt by blunt affronts, from God's wrathful resistance of the proud, Job xl. 11, 12.

Use 1. To learn statesmen wisdom to direct all their affairs.

Ver. 10. *But wisdom is profitable to direct.*

Ver. 11. *Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment ; and a babbler is no better.*

But wisdom is profitable or excellent to direct ; if the serpent do bite without enchantment, there is no profit to the master of the tongue. In the former verse Solomon had observed sundry vanities, as it were indeed flies, found in men of reputation for wisdom and honour ; and here, before he proceeds to declare any more of these dead flies, he interfereth a remedy to prevent such miscarriages, which is wisdom.

But wisdom, saith he, is profitable to direct as an antidote against all the former dead flies ; which he proveth, 1. By the unprofitableness of words, when hurt is done. If the serpent bite without enchantment, in vain are all great words, sweet words, afterwards, ver. 11. 2. By the effect of wisdom, and the words thereof. The words of a wise man are grace, ver. 12 ; but the lips of a fool, first, They swallow up the speaker, ver. 12. Secondly, They breathe, 1. In the beginning foolishness ; 2. In the end mischievous madness, ver. 13. Thirdly, They multiply many matters ; for so the word signifieth many projects, and those such as leave men doubtful and in suspense what will be the end or issue of all, ver. 14. Fourthly, They weary themselves and one another in their undue courses and projects. And this amplified by the cause thereof, their ignorance of the principles or highway road, broad way of government, expressed in a proverbial speech, because he knoweth not, that is, none of them knoweth the way to the city, ver. 16.

The 11th verse I turn, If the serpent bite without enchantment, there is no profit to the master of the tongue ; for so the words properly signify, and are so translated, Eccles. ii. 11. There is no profit, and the master of the tongue is a man skilful in speech, able and powerful in speech ; as the master of dreams, Gen. xxxvii. 19, is a man skilful in dreams ; a master of wing, Prov. i. 17, is skilful

in flying; a master of horns, Dan. viii. 6, is powerful in his horns. And so Mr Perkins translateth this verse in his discourse of witchcraft, chap. iv. sect. 1.

Doct. Wisdom is profitable to direct to the right avoidance of all such dead flies as are usually found dangerous in statesmen of reputation. Or, wisdom is of excellent use, or profitable, &c.; for the word signifieth excellency as well as profit, and so it is translated, Eccles. vii. 12. Hence Solomon prayed for this gift of all other, as most requisite for government, 1 Kings iii. 9.

Reason 1. Wisdom discerneth and chooseth the right end of government, which is, the punishment of evil-doers, the praise of the good, Rom. xiii. 4; 1 Tim. ii. 2. I say discerneth and chooseth; for wisdom is not in the head only, as discerning, but in the heart, as choosing the best good; else he that discerneth good, but chooseth it not, is still a fool.

Reason 2. Wisdom discerneth and chooseth the best means tending and leading to those ends; as, 1. Righteous laws, Dent. iv. 6, 8; 2. Wise counsellors, 1 Kings xii. 6; 3. Just judges, 2 Chron. xix. 5-7; Ps. lxxxii. 2, 5; 4. Valiant soldiers, 1 Sam. xvi. 18; 1 Chron. xii. 8; 1 Sam. xiv. 52; 5. Diligent improvement, first, Of earth by husbandry, Eccles. v. 9; Prov. xiv. 4; secondly, Of sea by merchandise, 1 Kings x. 22, 23, 28, 29; both which are wrapped up in the cunning artificer or artist, Isa. iii. 3.

Reason 3. Wisdom considereth the estate of the people, what it will willingly bear, and what it is able to bear, 1 Kings xii. 7; Neh. v. 18.

Reason 4. Wisdom deriveth all its light and strength from the prince of wisdom, who is wisdom itself, the wisdom of the Father, Prov. viii. 12, 15, and so denieth itself, Prov. iii. 5-7.

Use 1. To teach magistrates to lay aside all false guides in steering the course of government. It is not wit that is profitable to direct, Eccles. iv. 13, but wisdom; nor favour to favourites unfit for government, Eccles. x. 6, 7; nor strength, Eccles. ix. 16.

Use 2. To teach magistrates to improve their wisdom in all the former particulars mentioned in the reasons.

Doct. As a serpent biting without enchantment

cannot afterwards be healed with skilful words, so neither can a mischief befallen a prince or people for want of wisdom be afterwards healed by great or sweet words. The Scripture speaketh of some serpents which will not be charmed, Ps. lviii. 4, 5; Jer. viii. 17; but it implieth that some may be and are charmed by enchanters, joining societies cunningly with the devil, as the phrase is, Ps. lviii. 5, and when they are not charmed, then they sting without interruption and without remedy many times. So, when a prince hath not used wisdom to direct his affairs, he may be stung with a mortal mischief to himself and the state, and then skilful words will do no good. Rehoboam neglecting to charm the people's discontent beforehand, 1 Kings xii. 13-19, afterwards in vain came Adoram, what words soever he gave them to gather up tribute, ver. 18, yea, in vain were Abijam's savoury words afterwards, 2 Chron. xiii. 4-13.

Reason. From the strong and venomous and malignant inflammation which harsh and foolish words may kindle in an understanding and free people. It was a malignant inflammation which brake forth from the people incensed, when they rejected the seed of David, 1 Kings xii. 16.

Use 1. To observe the power of charmers by their covenant with Satan, who hath power over serpents, and therefore they are called the power of the enemy, Luke x. 19. Yet this power is limited; he cannot heal after biting, at least could not then, though his commission may be enlarged since; neither can he charm some serpents, Ps. lviii. 5; Jer. viii. 17. How much less can he charm the seed of the woman without special commission, and when he doth bite them, it is but the heel. Gen. iii. 15.

Use 2. To shew us the mighty virtue and efficacy of wisdom, that can charm malignant and venomous minds.

Ver. 12. *The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.*

Ver. 13. *The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness.*

Ver. 14. *A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be: and what shall be after him, who can tell him?*

Ver. 15. *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.*

Coherence, see in ver. 10. These words (the words of the wise man in grace) are a reason of what he said, ver. 10, that wisdom is profitable to direct, taken from the grace of a wise man's words, which maketh the argument of force, howsoever grace be taken.

Doct. 1. The words of the wise (even of the wise statesmen) are grace. Of statesmen Solomon here speaketh, from the beginning of this chapter to the end; and he speaketh of such wisdom as is profitable to direct in state affairs, ver. 10. Their words may be said to be grace, first, As flowing from the grace and favour of God, Ps. xlv. 2. Secondly, As ministering grace to the people, Eph. iv. 29; 1 Kings viii. 55-61; 1 Chron. xxix. 18; at least expressing the grace and favour of God, and the prince's favour and grace to them, Ps. cxxii. 6-9; Esther x. 3; seeking their wealth, speaking peace. Thirdly, As finding acceptance with the people, Prov. x. 32; 2 Sam. iii. 59; Esther x. 3; 'accepted of the multitude of his brethren.'

Doct. 2. The words of fools, especially of foolish statesmen, the beginning of them is foolishness, the end of them is madness, pernicious, and mischievous to themselves and others. And their ways are variable and of doubtful event, and wearisome even to themselves and all men, Esther iii. 8, 9. Haman began his speech with a foolish complaint against better men than himself, accusing them of that for a vice which was a virtue, (to live a separate course of life from the vain world, Num. xxiii. 9.) but the end of his speech was pernicious and mischievous madness to the Jews, Esther iii. 9, and to himself. It swallowed up himself, Esther vii. 4-6, &c.; 1 Kings xii. 14, it was a foolish beginning to acknowledge his father's rigour, but the end of his speech was mischievous madness to threaten more rigour. Variable in their projects, Jer. ii. 23, 36, 37; wearisome ways, Hab. ii. 13; Isa. xlvii. 13, and lviii. 9, 10.

Reason 1. From the ignorance of such persons (foolish statesmen) of the principles of civil government, implied in that proverbial speech, that they know not the way to the city, which is wont to be a broad roadway, but these discern it not, like men that have lost their way, Ps. cvii. 4, 40.

Reason 2. From God's rejection of them and their ways, Ps. cvii. 40; Jer. ii. 37.

Use 1. To teach magistrates to speak words of grace.

Use 2. To shew the folly and danger of foolish statesmen.

Ver. 16. *Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning!*

Ver. 17. *Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!*

Ver. 18. *By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.*

Ver. 19. *A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all things.*

In these words, over and above all the former, Solomon observeth two other vanities incident to statesmen, viz., childishness and intemperancy, or epicurism; which he amplifieth, first, By the adjunct, woeful estate of a land, where so it is, ver. 16; secondly, By the contrary blessed estate of such a land whose king is the son of nobles, and princes eat in due season, for strength, not for excess, ver. 17; thirdly, By the effects; which are, 1. Remissness in government, called here much slothfulness and idleness of hands, and (that which easily floweth from thence) the decay of the state of the commonwealth, expressed under the comparison of the decay of the house, ver. 18; 2. Prodigal expense of money, which groweth from their intemperancy in feasts, as the former did from childishness of government, ver. 19.

Doct. It is a woeful estate of a country or commonwealth where the king is childish and the princes epicures, or intemperate. On the contrary, the state is blessed where the king is noble, and the princes temperate.

The word translated woe doth signify an island, and because islands were at first more desolate, and less inhabited than the continent, therefore they called the doleful fowls that lodged in that island by the name of islands; such fowls as do not affect the company of men nor beasts, as screech-owls, and bitterns, and ostriches, &c., and so the word cometh to signify woeful or woe, such a kind of woe as accom-

panieth desolate islands—desolation itself; Woe to thee, O land, whose king is childish, and whose princes are riotous, they shall be as a desolate island, an habitation for screech-owls and every doleful bird.

A child, not so much in years, for Solomon himself was very young when he came to the crown; David saith of him, He was young and tender, 1 Chron. xxix. 1. Joash was but seven years old when he began to reign, yet he ruled well all the days of his youth, from the good counsel of his uncle Jehoiada, 2 Chron. xxiv. 1. Uzziah was but sixteen years old, yet he reigned well in his young time, by the good counsel of Zechariah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 3-5. Josiah was but eight years old, and he surpassed them all, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 1. Only Manasseh, of all the young kings, beginning to reign at twelve years, he did evil in his youth, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1.

A child therefore is rather meant childish, 1. In understanding, 1 Cor. xiv. 20; 2. In affection and disposition; first, Cleaving to young counsellors, 1 Kings xii. 8; secondly, Soon wavering in religion, Eph. iv. 14; thirdly, Led by sense and sensible objects, more than by depth of judgment and reason; led by passions and lusts of youth, pastimes and recreations, but careless of matters of importance. Thus Rehoboam is said to be young and tender in heart, when he was above forty-one years old, 1 Kings xiv. 21, with 2 Chron. xiii. 7. And so indeed Solomon expresseth this childishness in slothfulness and remissness of government, ver. 18, as by eating in the morning he expresseth luxurious feasting, ver. 19.

Whose princes eat in the morning, which impieth both the unseasonableness of their eating, especially their feasting then, as ver. 19, expoundeth it of the morning, being the principal time of judgment, Jer. xxi. 12. And the excess and riot of their eating, to wit, for gluttony and drunkenness, rather than for strength, as appeareth by the opposition of good princes' diet, ver. 17.

Reason 1. From the danger of childish government to a state, as also of riotous government. Which dangers be, 1. Remissness of government, or slothfulness, whence the decay of all good in a commonwealth, as in a house that is neglected; as decay of justice, trading, military power, and skill,

honour and reputation with foreign princes and states; and, which is worst of all, decay in religion, and purity thereof; whence also dropping in of contentious corruptions into all sorts. 2. Prodigal expence of the treasure of the state in feasting and banqueting, in masks and revels, where money must answer all; and that not a purseful, or pocketful, or bagful, or chestful, but a whole king's treasury; and when that faileth, then illegal exactions of the subjects' estates.

The son of nobles; not so much of noble ancestors, for most kings are such, and yet their kingdoms not always blessed; yea, sometimes they that are raised from low estates, as David from following the sheep, may be blessed princes, and the land blessed in them. But a son of nobles is a noble son, a man of noble spirit, or heroes, for from the Hebrew word *heroe* it seems to be derived, are so called of whiteness, not so much for wearing white garments, as being bright and glorious, *Viri illustres, et clarissimi*, opposed to dark or obscure men, Prov. xxii. 29.

A man of a noble spirit, first, *Notabilis*, well known and approved for his virtues, Deut. i. 13. Secondly, Of a public spirit; regardeth public good ends more than private self ends, Ps. cxxxvii. 6. Thirdly, Affecteth rather to be loved than feared, and yet to be feared too with due reverence; servile natures are imperious and cruel—*aut servit humiliter, aut superbe dominatur*; noble spirits, as of lions, will *parcere subjectis*, be moderate in punishments, merciful to suppliants. Fourthly, Regardeth honour above life, much more before money, preferring the fifth commandment above the sixth, much more above the eighth.

Eat in due season: 1. For time, not in the morning; 2. For measure, not for excess in gluttony and drunkenness, but sparingly.

But for strength, 1. Of body and mind; 2. Of fitness to the duties of their place.

Reason of the blessedness of the state by such: 1. Vigilancy, and diligent attention of such to state affairs; not suffering decays in the good of the state, nor droppings in of the mischievous ruinous evils; secondly, Provident frugality in preserving the treasure of the state, 2 Chron. ix. 27; 1 Kings x. 21.

Use 1. To teach us what to pray for in behalf of our native country : 1. What evils to be avoided ; 2. What blessings to be desired.

Use 2. To teach us what manner of magistrates are to be chosen in our little commonwealth, and how they are to walk. It is fellowship with Christ, and living by faith in him, that girdeth us up to our callings ; sitting loose from the head breedeth a paralytic distemper in the body.

Use 3. To teach all men a right use of meats and drinks ; large breakfasts break the necks of our strength and of our callings. The end of feasts should be for strength, and so moderate as our money may answer.

Use 4. To teach householders to beware of slothfulness and ill husbandry ; it will ruin our houses, for from thence is the comparison here fetched ;

Use 5. To teach us a wise use of money ; to be responsible to all our expenses.

Ver. 20. *Curse not the king, no not in thy thought ; and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber : for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.*

Solomon having declared many vanities, like dead flies, found in princes and statesmen, he now directeth wise subjects to some such Christian duties as are fit to be practised at all times, but most needful and seasonable to be attended to in evil and dangerous times, in this and the whole context of the next chapter. As, first, To beware of cursing princes and statesmen, however corrupt their government be, ver. 20 ; secondly, To bestow our talents liberally, whilst time serveth, before evil come upon the earth, chap. xi. 1, 2, &c. ; thirdly, To be diligent in our callings early and late, ver. 4-6.

Parts, two : first, A commandment forbidding to curse the king, or rich and great men, his princes and officers. And this prohibition amplified by the strictness of it, forbidding the cursing of them where it might be supposed to be done with greatest secrecy and safety : not the king in thy thought, the rich in thy bed-chamber. Secondly, A reason, from the danger of discovery of it by speedy and unlikely means ; for the birds of the air (the master of wings) will declare the word or matter.

Doct. Though the king should be childish, and princes intemperate and slothful, and both of them

suffer the state to fall to decay, yet it is neither lawful nor safe for private men to revile or curse either of them, no, not in the greatest, Exod. xxii. 28, where the prohibition is general, without restraint to good magistrates.

For opening of the point to be shewn : first, How far a private subject may go in such a case ; secondly, How far he may not go. A private subject may, first, Conceive of a king as he seeth him plainly to be, and so of other statesmen ; and accordingly, as his calling requireth it, he may reprove them all to their faces, 2 Sam. xii. 9 ; 1 Sam. xiii. 13, 14 ; 1 Kings xviii. 18, and xxi. 20 ; 2 Chron. xix. 2 ; Ezek. xxi. 25. This is not to vilify or curse them, but to restore and heal them, or at least to leave them without excuse. Secondly, He may complain of their wickedness to God, and confess it, Dan. ix. 8. Thirdly, He may speak of it to subjects so far as to prevent the corrupting of them by the authority or example of their governors, 2 Kings vi. 32 ; Hosea v. 11, and vii. 3, 5. Public persons and the whole people may resist them in evil, 2 Chron. xxvi. 17, 18 ; 1 Sam. xiv. 44, 45 ; but none may, first, Despise their callings or governments, which are of God, Jude 8 ; secondly, They may not revile them nor make them worse than they be ; תקל is to make light, as metals by clipping and washing ; 2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8, David was no son of Belial, nor bloody to the house of Saul, though so to Uriah ; thirdly, Imprecate or wish evil to them, Mat. v. 44, *à fortiori*.

Obj. Did not Paul revile Ananias ? Acts xxiii. 3.

Ans. He knew him to be a judge, ver. 2—sittest thou to judgment ? &c.—though he knew him not to be the high priest. But he did not revile him, but reproved him gravely for his hypocrisy—oh whited wall !—and iniquity, commanding him to be smitten against law, and prophesied his destruction. Nor doth he say he would not have said so much to him if he had known him to be the high priest, (for Jeremiah did say so much to Pashur, Jer. xx. 1-6,) though the high priesthood was then accomplished in Christ ; yet, while the temple stood, the shadows were to be buried with honour, but this was no dishonour to his place, to reprove him justly.

Reason 1. They are by their place fathers of the country, Isa. xlix. 23, and fathers, though wicked,

are not to be despised nor cursed, Exod. xxi. 17; Prov. xxx. 17.

Reason 2. They bear the name and place and image of God's sovereignty and authority, Exod. xxii. 28; Ps. lxxxii. 6.

Reason 3. They are heads of the whole body of the state, 1 Sam. xv. 17, and so in cursing them we curse ourselves and the whole state.

Reason 4. From the danger which will redound to ourselves by discovery of our words. Princes have long ears and quick-sighted eyes. Birds of the air are put hyperbolically for unlikely means, not so fitly expounded angels; for we do not read of their ministry in that kind, though a spirit of prophecy hath done as much, 2 Kings vi. 11, 12; nor devils, though they be called fowls of the air, Mat. xiii. 4, 19. But if they had a commission so to do, it would disturb all states. But the saying is verified, first, Sometimes in birds occasionally discovering secrets, as the swallows revealed Besrus's murder of his father; who, as he sat by the fire with his neighbours, the swallows chirping and singing above in the chimney, he proked them down and killed them; and when they that sat by him found fault with him for it, as an unnatural cruelty, he excused himself, that the burden of their song was a burden to him, which was, Besrus hath slain his father; whence he being apprehended and brought before the magistrates, confessed the murder and was executed. So *Ibici Grues* discovered the murder of the poet Ibicus; whence the proverb *Ibici Grues*. Secondly, Sometimes in words flying like winged fowls, flying in the mouths of idle talkers or indiscreet speakers, of spies or promoters, and of faithful subjects, Esther ii. 21, 23.

Use 1. To observe the divine authority of God's word, and the spiritual sovereignty thereof, putting a law upon our very thoughts, which no law of man can do, 2 Cor. x. 4.

Use 2. To teach magistrates to be the more careful of preserving God's honour, since he is careful of preserving theirs, even in the secret closets of their subjects. What a fearful ingratitude were it in a prince to curse and swear and blaspheme the name of God, who would have them not cursed, no, not in secret.

Use 3. To teach us to observe God's care of our

safety, who doth prevent us with such wary cautions, lest we fall into danger unexpectedly. We therefore ought to be the more regardful of the safety of his honour, and of his ordinances.

Use 4. To take up this lesson and counsel of Solomon, not to meddle out of our callings in state matters to the provocation of princes; yea, to bridle our tongues, though princes be not such public blessings as were to be wished. How much more ought we to be far off from reviling or vilifying good magistrates? God took it ill at Miriam's hand and Aaron's, Num. xii. 1, 2, 8, 9, and worse at the hands of Korah and his company, Num. xvi. 3-33.

CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1. Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.

Ver. 2. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

Ver. 3. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if the tree fall towards the south, or towards the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

Coherence, see above in chap. x. 20. Solomon having shewed sundry several vanities, which, like dead flies, are found in statesmen, he proceedeth to direct his wise subjects to some such Christian duties as are requisite at all times, but especially in such dangerous times as the vanity of great men are wont to bring upon a state, from chap. x. 20, to the end of the eighth discourse, of the vanity of the estate of the creatures, till we come to conclude the whole book; as, first, To beware of cursing princes and statesmen, how corrupt soever their government be, the better to provide for our own safety, chap. x. 20. Secondly, To be the more liberal to pious and charitable uses, in regard of the troubles coming upon the land, where such misgovernment is found, chap. xi. 1-3. Thirdly, To be the more diligent and fruitful in the duties of our calling, ver. 4-6. Fourthly, To break off a course of sin, and to hasten repentance and turning unto God, howsoever the times be, chap. xii. 7, 8; whereupon Solomon concludeth the whole book, chap. xii. 9-14. The text is an exhortation to liberality or beneficence—cast

thy bread, give a portion, &c., which is amplified by a twofold state of the subject: first, By the fleeting estate of the subject, like waters, ver. 2; secondly, By the variety of subjects, persons, or multitude of them, ver. 7, 8; and confirmed by four motives: first, From the recompense thereof at last—in fulness of days thou shalt find it, ver. 1. Secondly, From the uncertainty of future calamities threatening the state—for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the country, ver. 2. Thirdly, From the example of the clouds, which, when they are full, empty themselves upon the earth, ver. 3. Fourthly, From the certainty of the rest or abode of a benefit where it is bestowed, set forth by the similitude of a tree lying where it falleth, ver. 3.

Doct. 1. When dangerous times hang over the public state, it is a point of holy wisdom to be liberal and bountiful to charitable and pious uses, especially there, where there is least hope of recompense in man's eye. Bread cast upon the face of the waters is utterly lost in man's reason; it will either sink or swim away. Yet cast thy bread there, especially in dangerous times, when thou knowest not what evils are coming upon the land. There be six or seven properties of alms-deeds, or other good offices of Christian love and bounty, which Solomon comprehendeth, even all of them, in these words: first, To be doing good readily and roundly, not so as if a gift or good work stuck in a man's fingers, implied in the word *cast*; not give only, or draw out, but cast. God loveth a cheerful giver, 2 Cor. ix. 7. Secondly, To do it usefully and helpfully; cast thy bread, not stones, nor scorpions, nor scraps, nor refuse, but such things as may do true good, may be a staff and support to others, as bread. Bread (in Mat. v. 11) is put for all profitable outward things. Thirdly, To do it justly, of a man's own, not others'; not to rob one to succour another: give *thy* bread, Prov. v. 16, 17; Isa. lxi. 8. Pay debts first, give after. Fourthly, To do it freely, without hope of recompense from them on whom you cast your bread. Bread cast on water will either sink or swim away, Luke xiv. 13, 14. By waters is not here meant *locus irriguus*, moist and fruitful ground, as Isa. xxxii. 20; for there it is not said, Besides all waters—where such places are fruitful—but, Upon the face of the waters. Nor is here meant watery faces, weeping

for want, though that be part of the meaning. Fifthly, To do it sincerely, without aim of vainglory. This bread thus cast upon the face of the waters stayeth not to be seen of men, but either sinketh or swimmeth away. Bread given, as the pharisees did, for vainglory, is cast rather upon pillars of marble or of brass rather than upon fleeting waters. Sixthly, To do it frequently and often, not rarely and to a few: 'Give a portion to seven, and also to eight,' ver. 2. Seven put for many, 1 Sam. ii. 5; Micah v. 5. A good man disperseth his beneficence—to wit, to many, Ps. cxii. 9. The larger the field is wherein seed is scattered, the more hope of a plentiful harvest. Seventhly, To do it wisely and discreetly. 'Give a portion to seven, and also to eight,' implieth, 1. Not all to others, leaving none for home, but give a part; 2. Not all to some, none to others, but a part to seven, and also to eight; 3. Not a pittance, but a portion—such a proportion as whereon a poor man may work and occupy, to do some good withal, as with a portion.

Reason 1. From the recompense; for in multitude of days thou shalt find it, text—which implieth, First, Length of days, promised to men fruitful this way, which often holdeth in proper speech, Ps. xxxiv. 12, 14. Do good, and it is a way to see good days long, Dan. iv. 27. Liberal men seldom die young. Abraham lived long, Gen. xxv. 7, 8; Ps. xli. 2. Secondly, If they should die sooner, their children will find it, Ps. xxxvii. 25, 26. Thirdly, Sometimes themselves find speedy recompense in the same kind, 1 Kings xvii. 13-16. Fourthly, Sometimes they find it with usury, or advantage in spiritual and eternal grace and glory, Luke xvi. 10, &c.; Gal. vi. 6-9; 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19; 2 Tim. i. 16, &c.

Reason 2. From the uncertainty of future calamities, or rather certainty of their coming, but uncertainty in what kind, text, ver. 2. And therefore, first, It is good to be giving whilst we have it, lest all be swept away in a deluge of public calamity; secondly, It is wisdom by this means to prolong tranquillity, Dan. iv. 27; thirdly, It is seasonable to prepare against a storm, Ps. xli. 1, 3.

Reason 3. From the example of the clouds, which, being full of water, pour down rain, text, ver. 3, and that both upon earth and sea. Not like rich men who, the more rich they grow, grow the more nig-

garded, and give more sparingly than the poorer sort. Yea, the clouds, by pouring out rain regain it again both from the sea and earth, by ascending vapours; and so do liberal men gain by bounty, Prov. xi. 25.

Reason 4. From the uncertainty of the rest of a benefit where it is bestowed, as a tree resteth where it falleth, text, ver. 3. Benefit will be reaped from thence to thee, though they should not be the better for it, Isa. xlix. 4, 5; Ps. xxxv. 13; how much more when they do reap benefit by our beneficence, Job xxix. 13. and xxxi. 20.

Use 1. To exhort to unwearied and abundant fruitfulness in all these kinds, by all these reasons, as so many motives, Prov. xix. 17; Luke vi. 38.

Ver. 4. *He that observeth the wind, shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds, shall not reap.*

Ver. 5. *As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.*

Ver. 6. *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

Solomon, in regard of the dangers of the times, when kings are childish and princes humorous, exhorted to liberality in ver. 1-3, which was the second duty he inferred upon that occasion. In these words he presseth still the same, but with an enlargement unto all faithfulness and diligence in any duty of a man's calling, especially in such dangerous times; which is a third improvement of such evil times. To set forward this duty, he removeth a doubt which might hinder a man from beneficence and fruitfulness in his course and calling. The doubt is taken either from the fear of some danger or dangers that might befall a man in so doing, which he expreseth under a proverbial comparison, taken from husbandmen, who, for fear of foul weather, do sometimes neglect some duty of husbandry, in seed-time or harvest, ver. 4. Or else from some difficulty which sometimes accompany Christian and holy and great undertakings of duty, especially such duties as may help forward reformation in such times.

To the former he answereth, ver. 4, that such

fears of damage and danger are more dangerous than the hurt we fear; for they will prevent the performance of all good duties, and the recompense of that performance; as a husbandman that observeth the wind shall never sow, and he that observeth the clouds shall never reap, ver. 4.

To the latter he answereth by opposing the strange and secret assistance and success and deliverance which God giveth unto men in the duties of their calling. Which he amplifieth by a comparison from the like secret assistance and deliverance which God giveth to the child fashioned in the womb, both in the framing of his spirit, or soul, and in the setting and ordering of his bones; which is a strange, yet ordinary secret in nature, like unto which all the works which a man undertaketh in his calling are fashioned and wrought of God, who worketh all, ver. 5. And thus it cometh to pass when God is pleased to put to his helping hand to us in the works of our calling, otherwise nothing prospereth in our hand.

From both which Solomon inferreth an exhortation to diligence and fruitfulness in our calling, directly contrary to the former doubts and difficulties. The objector propounded doubts and difficulties, and thereupon neglected to sow. But Solomon inferreth a contrary conclusion; therefore to sow more abundantly and diligently. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening let not thy hand rest, or cease. Reason whereof he giveth from the uncertainty of the event or issue, reserved of God to this or that duty or work: 'For thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this or that; or whether both shall be alike good,' ver. 6.

Doct. He that shall be discouraged from beneficence in his course, and from faithfulness in his calling, by doubts and fears of uncertain dangers and damages, shall never do good in this world, nor receive good in the world that is to come.

He that observeth the wind, that is, so observeth it as to forbear sowing,

Shall never sow, that is, never do good in this life, which is a time of sowing.

He that observeth the clouds, which are as uncertain signs of bad weather as the wind,

He shall never reap, to wit, any recompense of his work in the other world, which is the harvest-

time chiefly, Mat. xiii. 39, though there is also a harvest-time of reaping, even in this world, Prov. xi. 31. As if a man shall be loath to cast his bread upon the waters for fear of sickness, old age, store of children growing on, the unsettledness of the times, &c. Such a one shall both lose his seed, his good work, and his harvest of reward from God. As the husbandman, that keepeth his corn in his garner or barn, for fear of sowing in doubtful weather, shall both lose his crop, and, in time, vermin and other casualty will consume his grain in his barn.

Reason 1. From the uncertainty of the events of all endeavours in an ordinary course, text, ver. 6; Acts xx. 22; God so providing that the godly should live by faith, and the wicked should either, first, Grow unprofitable in their talents, because God is a hard master, Mat. xxv. 24; secondly, Grow hardened, either in pride, if they prosper, Amos vi. 13; Hab. i. 16; or in discontent, if they be crossed, Isa. viii. 21.

Reason 2. From the sorrow and afflictions that God hath annexed to all the labours of our calling, Gen. iii. 19.

Reason 3. From Satan's readiness and watchfulness to stir up and aggravate dangers and discouragements to any goodness, Rev. xii. 4.

Reason 4. From the trials which God puts upon us, by causing many dangers and evils to hover over us, though not to bring them upon us, but to try our obedience. So the people in the wilderness feared thirst and famine and the Anakims, but it was only to try their obedience; for God was ever ready with supply, Deut. viii. 2.

Reason 5. From our own faithless and sluggish hearts, which are ready to imagine fears of evil where none be, Prov. xxvi. 13. Lions are as much afraid of streets, as men of deserts.

Use 1. To teach us wisely to consider what good duties God requireth of us in our Christian course and calling, and set upon it without fear or forlorn discouragement. Every man in his place, the magistrate, Neh. vi. 9, 11; the minister, Acts xx. 22-24; Luke xiii. 31, 32; yea, the wife, 1 Pet. iii. 6; yea, children and servants, fear not turning to God for fear of carnal parents, master, fellows, &c.

Quest. But may not a man for fear of danger hold off his hand from some duty in some cases?

Ans. Yes, in case two things concur: first, The dangers be certain, not as winds and clouds, which may as well blow over as bring foul weather; secondly, The dangers be of greater damage than the duty can be of use to myself and others. Thus David spared Joab, 2 Sam. iii. 39; and the Jews forbore the building of the temple, Ezra iv. 23, 24. Otherwise fear not their fears, 1 Pet. iii. 14; Prov. xxix. 25; Luke xii. 4, 5.

Use 2. To look at all good duties, as sowing of seed, Gal. vi. 7, 8. As therefore a man would make choice of precious seed, so do every work in the best manner; let sacrifices be of the fattest, Gen. iv. 3, 4.

Use 3. To expect a harvest, a reaping-time according to our seed, Gal. vi. 7-10.

Ver. 5. *As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all, &c.*

In these words Solomon exhorteth to fruitfulness in good duties, the duties of our calling, especially those that are most behoveful in ill times, by removing the impediments, which are three: first, From the hazard and danger, yet uncertain danger, that may befall ourselves, of which was spoken in ver. 4. Secondly, From the difficulty which may be in sundry duties needful to be performed in ill times, especially in case a man's calling require him to seek reformation of public evils, ver. 5; which he removeth by the unknown help and success that God will cast in and afford such hard attempts, which exceed the skill and strength of man. This he setteth forth by the like help of God, ordinarily put forth, in producing two great works, both of them far exceeding the strength and skill of man: first, As thou knowest not the way of the spirit, to wit, of its conveyance into the child bred in the womb, and its work there; secondly, As thou knowest not the way of the bones in the womb of her that is with child; so thou knowest not the work of God which worketh all, ver. 5. Thirdly, From the uncertainty of prosperous or good success; from whence Solomon gathereth rather a motive to

continual fruitfulness in good duties upon all opportunities: ver. 6, 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper,' &c. The expression is an allegory taken from husbandry; sow in all seasons, morning, evening, in winter, in the spring, for thou knowest not whether seed-time shall prosper, &c.

Doct. 1. As is the way of the spirit, and of the bones of the woman with child, so is the way of God in working our works for us, secret and hidden from us; yet, when he pleaseth, carries them on effectually. The way of the spirit is the way of entrance of it into the infant conceived in the womb. To beget a soul is beyond the skill or strength of the parents, yea, or to frame the body in the womb; yea, we know not how God worketh it: whether, first, By creation of nothing. If so, whether God maketh it pure; then how cometh it to be defiled? the body being without sin, as a carcase after death, cannot defile the soul with sin. If impure; then how is not God the author of sin. Secondly, By propagation; if so, then it is made either of the whole soul of the parents, and then the parents would die; or of part of the soul, and then the soul were partable or dividable, and the soul of the parents would be maimed; or of the seed of the soul, but it hath no excrement, as having no superfluity of nourishment. Thirdly, By transfusion, as one candle transfuseth the like candle-light into prepared matter; if so, then why do not acts of generation often speed in couples most suitable? and why are the souls of children so often unlike to parents?

Fourthly, By efformation, as the potter formeth a vessel out of clay, which, of all the rest, is most probable—to wit, that God formeth the soul, though not of nothing, which is properly creation, but of pre-existent matter, whether of the spirituous part of the seed, which is easy for God to do, or of the souls of the parents, as of Adam's rib he made his wife's body, which no man can do, but only God, it being more than God hath given to nature to produce such a work. Hence God is said to be a former of souls, Zech. xii. 1, as a potter of a vessel of clay.

Or the way of the spirit, may be meant the manner of its fashioning the organs of the body, in case

it be thought instrumental to God, it being, as they say it is, *Sui domicili architedrix*. How cometh the soul to work so skilful and curious a fabric which it knoweth not, nor can shape the like when it is grown up to ripest understanding, skill, and experience? Only it is the work of the Lord, who, when he pleaseth to concur, the work is carried on effectually.

Also the way of the spirit; it is a hidden secret to us, if spirit be extended farther to signify breath, as often it doth, how the child in the womb can take its breath twenty weeks in the womb. If it breathe not, how doth the child live? If it do breathe, how cometh it to pass it is not stifled in the womb?

The way of the bones of her that is with child, for so the way may be repeated from the former part of the sentence, how they come to be opened to give passage to the infant, or how closed and shut again, and both without breaking; and how in some soon and easily, in others late and hardly, Job x. 10–12; Ps. cxxxix. 13–16. So is it in all the great works of God, which we do transact or pass through, as in our regeneration, John iii. 8, and i. 13; in our victories over many and great corruptions and temptations; so in men's public vocations. It seemed an incredible work to Moses to deliver Israel from Pharaoh; so to Esther to work deliverance for her people; so to Samuel to anoint a king against Saul, 1 Sam. xvi. 2; so to Nehemiah to repair Jerusalem, yet, according to the good hand of God, it was done, Neh. ii. 8; so to Zerubbabel to build a temple, which required Solomon's treasure, Hag. ii. 1–3, &c.

Use 1. To teach women with child not to faint under the danger or difficulty of their travail, but to look up to God who worketh all. God, as he hath given a soul to the child, you know not what way; and as he hath fashioned the bones of the child, you know not how; so he it is that worketh safe and comfortable deliverance, Isa. lxvi. 9.

Use 2. To encourage men to undertake the works of their calling, though never so difficult and dangerous; go on, be doing. Little doth any man know by what weak means God bringeth mighty things to pass. Wherefore hath God so mightily stretched forth his powerful arm in our first coming into the world, but to give us a pledge from our tender years

of his power and readiness to assist us in all the works he hath to do by us? Isa. xlii. 3, 4.

Use 3. To stir us up to give up ourselves to the Lord, in the new birth especially, which, though it be a great work and difficult, yea, impossible to flesh and blood, yet we little know, when God is pleased to set in, how much may be wrought beyond what we can ask or think.

Ver. 6. *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

Coherence, see in ver. 5, 6.

Doct. 1. The works or labours of a man in his course and calling, they are his seed. The metaphor is borrowed from husbandry, who sow their seed in all seasons, morning, evening, winter, spring, Hosea x. 12; Prov. xi. 18; Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6; Job iv. 8.

Use 1. From the proportion our works have to fruits; whence they are often called fruits, Phil. i. 11; Col. i. 6; Mat. xxi. 34; Rom. i. 13. Now it is a usual thing in nature that the seed of all fruitful trees lieth in their fruits, Gen. i. 12.

Reason 2. From the smallness of it in itself, Mat. xiii. 31, yet yielding great growth and increase, Gal. vi. 6, 7; Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6. It was a small seed that word, 2 Kings v. 8, yet brought forth great increase.

Reason 3. From the lying of it for a time, as it were, under the clods and furrows of the earth, in obscurity, seeming rather to fall into loss than to promise increase, Ps. cxxvi. 5.

Use 1. To provoke to sow precious seed, let our ways be fruitful, and fruitful in the best works. No fruit but hath his seed in it, and the better the seed, the richer the harvest; every man in his calling let him do his works of the best.

Use 2. To encourage every man to wait for a greater increase of his labour than it is worth. The seed is little worth compared to the harvest, 1 Kings xix. 19, 20.

Doct. 2. Our ignorance and uncertainty of success of our labours in our callings should not dishearten us, but rather encourage us to a greater diligence and fruitfulness in them, Acts xx. 22.

Reason 1. From the strict account we must give

of our time and talents unto God, Eph. v. 15; Mat. xxv. 26, 27.

Reason 2. From the abundant recompense of reward to fruitfulness in good duties, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Reason 3. From the greater hopes of a more plentiful harvest when more variety of seed is sown. If one miscarry, the other may take; yea, and none will be lost. The merchant that tradeth in many barks is more like to see a safe return of some.

Reason 4. From the greater exercise of faith, hope, and patience where events are uncertain, 2 Cor. v. 7; 1 Cor. ix. 10; James v. 7.

Use 1. To exhort to fruitfulness in our course and calling upon all occasions and opportunities: 'In the morning sow thy seed, in the evening let not thy hand rest.' Seed in the garner multiplieth not, yea, rather decreaseth and corrupteth. Minister in his calling, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2; magistrate in his, Ps. ci. 8; every man in his, Prov. x. 4, 5.

Use 2. To persuade us to contentment in ignorance and uncertainty of events; and learn we rather the more dependence on the Lord for his blessing, and be more thankful for any good success at any time.

Use 3. To be more fruitful in that which is good, for our ignorance sake of the events of our labour, text.

Ver. 7. *Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun:*

Ver. 8. *But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.*

Coherence, see ver. 1-3. These words express and declare the fourth wholesome instruction which Solomon giveth to men that live in the ruinous times of a civil state; wherein he teacheth all men this holy duty, that however the times here may fall out to their own particular, yet to remember the dark times that remain after this life is ended, and therefore so to provide and prepare in this life, as that we may with comfort leave it; which duty Solomon requireth may not be neglected, notwithstanding three diverse things which might occasion the neglect of it: first, The sweetness of life for the present, ver. 7; secondly, The long continuance of life to some men; thirdly, The prosperity and comfort-

able estate that may befall some men in their long life. Yet to remember, first, The days of darkness (which are coming after this life is ended) are many; secondly, That all the future time and work will be but vanity, ver. 8.

The light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun. Light is a periphrasis of this natural life, Job iii. 20; so here, as who should say, life is sweet; and so they that behold the sun are put for men living in this world, Eccles. vii. 11. And here both are put in opposition to the days of darkness after this life is ended, which are days of death and burial.

Doct. Though life be sweet, and to some men long, yea, and comfortable all their days, yet let them remember that the days which are coming are many, both of darkness and vanity. The sweetness of life is argued by even Peter's loathness to die, even when an aged Christian, and the cause of death was honourable and grateful, John xxi. 18. Days of death and burial are days of darkness, Job x. 21, 22; and in hell the darkness is extreme and everlasting; the darkness is outward or extreme, Mat. xxii. 13; notwithstanding the fire, Mat. xxv. 41; as a fire of brimstone, Isa. xxx. 33.

Reason of life's sweetness: first, From many desirable comforts that we enjoy in this life, congruous and suitable to all our senses, and to all our affections; secondly, From the intimate union of soul and body, so as they both make but one person; hence loathness to part. We will lose any member to save head and heart, or any vital part.

Some men spend their days in prosperity, Job xxi. 13.

Reason 1. From the reward of godliness, Prov. iii. 16.

Reason 2. From the patience and bounty of God to evil men, Gen. xxv. 17.

Reasons why the days of darkness and vanity are many: first, From their continuance to the resurrection, in the end of the world, John xiv. 12.

Secondly, From the ignorance and oblivion of all things in the grave, Ps. lxxxviii. 12, and vi. 5.

Thirdly, From the disappointment of any labour all that time, Eccles. ix. 10; Ps. xxx. 9.

This to be remembered. Words of sense in the Hebrew are understood with affection and action;

so this word, Eccles. xii. 1, which implieth here, 1. Continual mindful knowledge of it; 2. So to be affected with care and conscience of it, as that it may take deeper impression in us than all the transient cares and comforts of this natural life, whereof, though the days be many, yet not so many; 3. So to provide in this life as that when our bodies shall sleep in darkness, yet our souls may enjoy the light and comfort of everlasting life and blessedness.

Reason 1. From the benefit of such remembrance. In so doing we remember God, Eccles. xii. 1, and ourselves also, Luke xvi. 4.

Reason 2. From the danger and folly, brutish folly, of such forgetfulness, Job xxi. 13; Eccles. iii. 21.

Use of life's sweetness: 1. For thankfulness to God, who hath given us life, and all the lively comforts of it, Job x. 12. 2. For thankfulness to Christ, who laid down his life for our sakes, Mat. xx. 28, whence we are to live to him, 2 Cor. v. 15.

Use 2. To learn to behold a greater sweetness in the life of grace, in union with Christ, in the light of God's countenance, Ps. iv. 6, 7, and lxiii. 3.

Use 1. Of many days of darkness and vanity, and remembrance hereof: 1. To warn us not to be so taken up with the sweetness of this life, as to forget the far longer time to come.

Use 2. To teach us not to envy the many prosperous days of wicked men here; their lightsome days here are but a few to their dark days behind.

Use 3. To provide here for life in death, and for light in darkness, and for felicity against vanity. Means hereof: first, Meditation frequent, and constant, and serious, of the shortness of this life, and of all the comforts of it, Isa. xl. 6-8; secondly, Not to rest in a state of darkness here, Eph. v. 8; 1 John i. 6; thirdly, Behold Christ losing his sweet life for us, and mourn over him, Zech. xii. 10; fourthly, Walk in his light, 1 John i. 7.

Ver. 9. *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*

Ver. 10. *Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.*

For a fifth wholesome counsel and instruction, Solomon giveth it unto young men, which is twofold : first, To know God will bring them to judgment, ver. 9, 10 ; secondly, To remember their Creator in the days of their youth, ver. 1-7. And both this and the former counsels are but further motives and directions to take the counsel given, ver. 6, 4, sowing our seed in the morning, and in the evening not to cease.

Reason 1. For after this life is ended, many will be the days of darkness, and they will be days of vanity, ver. 7, 8.

Reason 2. For youth is the morning of our age, and so a fit time to sow good seed, and usually misemployed to the sowing of vanity, ver. 9, 10. And there be three words that express it : שחרות doth properly signify the morning of age, ver. 10. בהורות, youth, is, as the word signifieth, the choice age of a man's life, as that, 1. Which is chosen to most employments of action ; 2. Wherein a man is to choose what course to take ; 3. And which a man would choose to live in always. ילדות is childhood, which is the green flourishing blood of age or life.

Parts, first, An ironical concession to children and youth to rejoice in their days and ways : 'Rejoice, O young man,' &c. Secondly, A serious admonition to know the judgment of God reserved for them : 'But know that,' &c., ver. 9. Thirdly, Hence an exhortation to put away and remove the passions and lusts of youth and childhood, ver. 10 ; therefore remove the irascible passions of the heart and evil from thy flesh, that is, the lusts of the flesh. Fourthly, A reason of that exhortation, from the vanity of childhood and youth, ver. 10.

Doct. 1. God is wont in a holy scorn to give up children and youth in their own days, to take their own ways and to rejoice, or applaud themselves, in them. See the like kind of irony or holy scorn, 1 Kings xviii. 27, and xxii. 15 ; 2 Chron. xxv. 8.

Quest. But doth not God speak seriously, as allowing children and youth more liberties than are meet for ripper years ? as chap. ix. 7-9.

Ans. There be some lawful liberties which God doth allow to that age, as Zech. viii. 5, and ix. 17. But if he had spoken of these, he would have given some just ground of encouragement, (for it is your

portion, or the like ;) but here he rather giveth a check and admonition against it, from a ground that is wont to damp, not lawful, but carnal delights : 'But know that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment.' The ways of, 1. Childhood : first, Ignorance, 1 Cor. xiv. 20 ; secondly, Vanity, serious in trifles, and trifling in serious things, text, ver. 10 ; thirdly, Folly ; fourthly, Falsehood, Ps. lvi. 3 ; fifthly, Forwardness, Mat. xi. 16, 17. 2. Youth : first, High conceits of their own sufficiency and worth, 1 Tim. iii. 6 ; secondly, Inordinate and excessive love of liberty ; thirdly, Wantonness ; fourthly, Strong affections upon weak grounds ; fifthly, Impatience of counsels and reproofs, which is stubbornness, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19 ; sixthly, Prodigality, Luke xv. 12, 13 ; seventhly, Impudency, Isa. iii. 5. God giveth up children and youth to these ways, first, By not giving them his grace, either in restraining or converting so soon. Secondly, By taking from them such parents, governors, and friends as might restrain them, 2 Chron. xxiv. 17 ; as he that taketh away a dam, giveth a running river leave to run strongly. Thirdly, By giving them up to a company of flatterers and parasites, sons of Belial, who encourage them to evil, 2 Chron. xxiv. 17, 18, and harden them against wise and grave counsel, 1 Kings xii. 10, 11. Fourthly, By suiting the heart with fit and strong objects, and leaving the heart to the impetuosity of its own passions and lusts.

Reason 1. From the idol of selffulness which God seeth in the heart of youth, according to which he answereth them and all others, Ezek. xiv. 4.

Reason 2. From their wilful disobedience, Ps. lxxxi. 11.

Reason 3. From his delight to scorn scornors, Prov. iii. 34 ; Ps. ii. 3, 4.

Reason 4. From his purpose to magnify his grace the more, and to humble them the more in their conversion, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19.

Use 1. To humble childhood and youth the more, the flower of whose age is so much corrupted. If our choice days be so wicked, what are our dregs ? If our first-fruits be so unclean, what is our whole lump ? yea, and this spiritual judgment should humble youth the more, for it is a more dreadful judgment for God to scorn, than to frown and threaten.

Doct. 2. God would have children and youth to know that God will bring them to judgment for all their childish and youthful courses, and for their delight in them, Ps. l. 18–22; Rev. xx. 12; 2 Cor. v. 10; Eccles. xii. 14.

Reason 1. From God's impartial justice to all, Rom. ii. 6–11. God taketh no pleasure in proper youth, Ps. cxlvii. 10, nor pity on carnal children.

Reason 2. From the proportion which God keepeth in recompensing like measure, yea, double measure of torment to deliciousness, Rev. xviii. 7.

Use 1. To charge children and youth to put away and remove from them their passions and lusts, the evils of their flesh, ver. 10. Youth eagerly pursue their lusts, and boisterously contend for them, but lusts overwhelmed with the greater torments, *et potentes potenter torquebuntur*.

Use 2. To discover and convince the vanity of childhood and youth, ver. 10. In regard, first, Of the many corruptions incident to their age, mentioned above; secondly, Of their fond rejoicing in them, as a fool in his fetters and shackles; thirdly, Of the danger growing thereby, of impenitency here, and of judgment hereafter.

Use 3. To exhort both to remember their Creator in their prime days, Eccles. xii. 1.

CHAPTER XII.

Ver. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

Solomon, to restrain children and youth from the vanities of their age, propounded to them a double antidote: first, The knowledge of God's approaching judgment, whereto he will bring them for all the evils of their youth, chap. xi. 9, whence he inferred two corollaries: 1. An exhortation to put away youthful passions and lusts; 2. The vanity of childhood and youth, chap. xi. 10. Secondly, The remembrance of their Creators in the days of their youth, chap. xii. 1. The copulative, *and*, implieth a connexion upon the former, as the addition of another remedy like the former.

Doct. 1. The remembrance of our Creator in the days of our youth is a sovereign remedy against the

vanities both of youth and age. It is a remedy against the vanities of youth before spoken of; and the words following, 'before the evil days come,' &c., argue it is a remedy against the wearisome vanities of old age. Remember words of sense, in the Hebrew tongue, are to be understood with affection and action, by reason of the combination and concatenation of all the faculties of the soul in pure nature; like as of links in a chain—draw one and draw all, break one and break all, Luke xxiii. 42; 1 Sam. i. 19; Ps. cvi. 4, 7; Heb. xiii. 3; Rev. ii. 5. Remembrance of God implieth and inferreth, 1. Turning to him, Ps. xxii. 27; 2. Trust and joy in him, Isa. li. 13; 3. Service and obedience to him, Deut. viii. 11, 19; Ps. ix. 17; Judges iii. 7; 4. Thankfulness to him, Deut. viii. 18.

Thy Creator, setteth forth God as the author and fountain of all our being out of nothing; which argueth God to be, 1. The end of all our being, Prov. xvi. 4; 2. Our preserver and governor, Isa. xl. 26; 3. Our owner and possessor and Lord, Isa. xliii. 1; 4. Intimately acquainted with all our ways, Ps. xxxiii. 15; 5. Unwilling, yea, disdaining to have his work deformed or corrupted, Deut. xxxii. 5, 6; 6. Able easily to destroy us, Ps. civ. 29, 30.

Creators, implieth more creators than one—all the three persons concurring in the work, Gen. i. 26.

Remember Jesus Christ our Redeemer, 1. As one that died and rose again for us, 2 Tim. ii. 8; 2. And without whom we are strangers from God, Eph. ii. 12; 3. In whom we become new creatures, 2 Cor. v. 17; 4. And through whom the Father is well pleased with us, Mat. iii. 17.

Remember the Holy Ghost, first, Who uniteth us to Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 17, and without whom we are carnal and sensual, Jude 19; John iii. 6. Secondly, Who sanctifieth us to God, and that in a creating way, Ps. li. 10, 11; mortifying our passions and lusts, Rom. viii. 13; quickening us to righteousness. Thirdly, Who pacifieth and comforteth our consciences, John xiv. 16, 17, and that in a creating way, Ps. xxxi. 17.

Reason 1. From the vanity of youth and age without this remembrance of our Creators, text; Eccles. xii. 1, with chap. xi. 9.

Reason 2. From the benefit of this yoke upon youth, Lam. iii. 27–30.

Reason 3. From the sanctification of the whole lump of our life, by the sanctifying of these first-fruits, Rom. xi. 16.

Use 1. To reprove forgetfulness of our Creator in this time of youth. It causeth old age to perish in such, to be good for nothing, Job xx. 1-3. Youth and childhood is the seed-time of grace and all goodness. If in the spring no seed be sown, or none but cockle and darnel, and such weeds, what hope of harvest? Isa. xvii. 10, 11. From a threefold cause of difficulty, 1. Custom in sin, Jer. xiii. 29; 2. Satan's long possession, Mark ix. 21, 29; 3. God's rejection, Prov. i. 24-28.

Use 2. To exhort children and youth to heed this counsel. As the people said to the blind man, Arise, he calleth thee, Mark x. 49; so here God accepteth the first ripe fruits, Micah vii. 1. He taketh it then so kindly, that he will after pass by many backslidings, Jer. ii. 2, with chap. iii. 1-3. It is the ornament of youth, of young men, of maids, Jer. ii. 32.

Means by which God useth to heal such: first, Attention to the word, Ps. cxix. 9; Prov. viii. 34. Secondly, Mourning for stubbornness, and prayer for converting grace, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. Thirdly, Abandoning of bad company, Ps. cxix. 115. Fourthly, Reforming known evils upon reproof, Prov. i. 23.

While the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, wherein thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. These words begin a description, first, Of the wearisome evils of old age, from the latter part of this verse to the end of the 6th; secondly, Of death, ver. 7; and both of them brought in as a double strong motive to urge young men in their youth to remember their Creator.

This former reason is taken from the support and remedy which the remembrance of our Creator in the days of our youth will give to the evils of old age, ver. 1-6. The latter from our dissolution and return to God in death, ver. 7.

Doct. The days of old age are evil and unpleasant times, and old age itself will so acknowledge it, 2 Sam. xix. 35; and yet he was of the better sort of old men, and very well provided of all helps, ver. 32, and as then but eighty years old, Gen. xlvii. 9; Ps. xc. 10.

The evils of old age are partly, 1. Natural: first, In

the estate,—the loss of dearest friends and acquaintances, Gen. xxxvii. 34, 35, and xlii. 36, and contempt of younger people, Job xxx. 11-13; secondly, In the body,—dimness and decay of all the senses, 2 Sam. xix. 34, 35, and manifold pains and aches and diseases incident to that age.

2. Moral: first, Seeking wealth greedily, yet loath to use it; secondly, Slow and cold in proceedings, yea, timorous and fearful, yet chafing at others' backwardness; thirdly, Hard to be pleased himself, and as hard to please others; fourthly, Complaining of present times, but praising former days of old, which the old men of those days as much complained of as he of these.

3. Spiritual: first, Ignorance; secondly, Unapproachableness and untractableness to be taught or admonished, Eccles. iv. 13; thirdly, Pride of spirit; fourthly, Deceitfulness; fifthly, Impenitency, through custom, and hardening in sin and self-conceit.

Reason 1. From sins of youth, Job xx. 11.

Reason 2. From the vanity of all creature-comforts, which must fade, Isa. xl. 6.

Reason 3. From the necessity of ripening in that age, either for hell or heaven, Job v. 26, in the autumn of our age.

Reason of old men's acknowledgment of it: From their querulous and discontented spirit.

Doct. 3. The remembrance of God in the days of youth is a comfortable preservative against the evil and unpleasant time of age; for as an antidote against this evil, Solomon prescribeth this. Hence the age of Abraham and David are called a good old age, Gen. xxv. 8; 1 Chron. xx. 28.

Reason 1. From the blessing of good old age removing and healing the contrary evils. 1. Natural: first, In the estate; friends not lost, but gone before, and we haste after them; a crown of glory instead of contempt, Prov. xvi. 31. Secondly, In the body; the power and life of faith to put strength in weakness, health in sickness, ease in pain, Heb. xi. 34; Joshua xiv. 10; the benefit of God's fear, Prov. iii. 7, 8.

2. Moral and spiritual. Corruptions now more mortified than ever, 2 Tim. iv. 7; grace more lively, powerful, and fruitful, Ps. xcii. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 16; heaven (as a haven) in view, seasoning and sweetening all, 2 Tim. iv. 8.

Reason 2. From the gracious and powerful presence of God to support them in age whom he hath guided in youth, Isa. xlvii. 3, 4.

Use 1. To set on Solomon's counsel upon young men, to be the more mindful of their Creator in the days of their youth, to find the evils of old age either more fully removed, or more easily borne. If young men neglect this duty in their best times, they will be far more indisposed in their evil days.

Use 2. To provoke such as are entering upon old age to be more solicitous of remembering God and themselves, seeing they are hasting fast into these evils. It is a just reproof to such as take no notice of decays of nature. See the simile, Hosea vii. 9.

Use 3. To enforce carnal old men to redeem the opportunities that are lost. The evil of the times Paul maketh a motive to this duty, Eph. v. 15, 16.

Ver. 2. While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain :

Ver. 3. In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease, because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened ;

Ver. 4. And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low ;

Ver. 5. Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail : because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets :

Ver. 6. Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

Solomon having styled old age an evil and unpleasant time, ver. 1, he now proceedeth to describe more particularly the decays and infirmities of nature in old men, which make their days evil and unpleasant ; which are of three sorts : first, Some such as befall the former part of old age, whilst as yet they are able to go abroad, ver. 2 to part of the 5th ; secondly, Some of decrepit old age, when death is very near approaching, and themselves

drawing on fast to it, latter part of ver. 5, with 6, 7 ; thirdly, Death itself, ver. 7.

The decays and infirmities of old age, whilst as yet they are able to walk abroad, be,

First, The darkness of the lights about them, whether natural, as sun, light, (of the day when the sun is under a cloud,) moon, stars ; or artificial lights, as candles, torches, &c. This darkness cometh not from the decay of those lights, but from the dimness of our sight, whence need of spectacles. I do not understand this to be a description of adversity ; for though darkness be often put for adversity, and light for prosperity, yet we read not of the sun, moon, and stars put together for prosperity, nor the darkness of them put for adversity.

Secondly, The returning of the clouds after rain, is an allusion to the wintery state of old age. In summer after rain the clouds break up, and fair weather followeth ; but in winter season after rain clouds still remain, and return. So, though in youth, after weeping, and coughs, and rheums dried up, the brain is clearer and drier ; yet in old age, after colds, and coughs, and rheums, and pozes, there still remain and return clouds, and vapours, and fumes in the brain, through the store of superfluous and excrementitious moisture of old bodies.

Thirdly, When the keepers of the house tremble, ver. 3. Some take these keepers of the house to be the five senses, which are indeed the keepers of the body ; but their decay is not fitly called trembling ; and besides, of their decay he speaketh expressly in the sequel. The keepers of the house are therefore the hands and arms, which in young men are steady and strong, and do also keep both the body and house by repulsing annoyances, and providing useful things, food, raiment, &c. These tremble, grow feeble, and shake in old age.

Fourthly, The strong men bow themselves. When the thighs and legs, which in young men went straight and strong, now buckle and stoop, that an old man standeth in need of a staff to support him.

Fifthly, The grinders cease because they are few. When the teeth cease to chew meat, many of them being worn out. Teeth come not with us into the world, and they commonly leave old men, at least many of them, before they leave the world.

Sixthly, Those that look out at the windows are

darkened. When the eyes grow so dim that we cannot see well with spectacles, which is a further degree of dimness of sight than was mentioned in ver. 2.

Seventhly, The doors are shut without, when, or because, the sound of the grinding is low, ver. 4,—that is, the lips, which are the doors, Ps. cxli. 3, are shut together; when, for want of teeth to grind the meat, the meat is rolled and chavelled in the mouth, and had need of shut lips to keep it from falling out of the mouth.

Eighthly, He shall rise up at the sound of the bird. The least noise of a swallow or other bird will waken an old man, through the natural dryness of his brain, and through the weariness of any posture. In the daytime he is weary of sitting, and soon goeth to bed with the lamb; in the night he is weary of lying, and soon riseth with the lark.

Ninthly, The daughters of music are abased, when either instruments of speech fail, which make music, or instruments of hearing fail, which receive music. Speech and hearing both fail, as in Barzillai, 2 Sam. xix. 35; which is the more observable, that old men whose hearing is so quick as to be wakened with the sound of a bird, and yet the exquisiteness of the sense of hearing (to delight in the sound of music) is quite gone.

Tenthly, They shall be afraid of that which is high, and fear shall be in the way, ver. 5; because old men are afraid of climbing, in regard of the stiffness of their joints, and unwieldiness of their bodies. They fear any stumbling-stone in the way, lest it give them a fall, or anything that meeteth them, lest it throw them down.

Eleventhly, The almond-tree flourisheth. When his head groweth gray and hoary, which is a flourishing ornament, Prov. xvi. 31, but an evident decay of due moisture to nourish the hair of the head and beard. The almond-tree is the first that flourisheth in the spring, Jer. i. 11, 12, and hath his name from early blossoming; it is here a resemblance of a hoary head, yet with this difference, 1. The almond-tree flourisheth in the spring, the hoary head in the winter of our age; 2. That tree flourisheth before fruit, but the head flourisheth after it. And yet it may indeed be said that the hoary head is the flourishing of the old man in the spring of another world of immortality.

Twelfthly, The grasshopper or locust shall be a burden. Whether by his noise (but of that before in the voice of a bird, ver. 4,) or, by an hyperbole, by his weight, an old man cannot bear the lightest burden; but most fitly, his slowness of digestion. Though the locust be a clean and wholesome food, and much used in those countries, especially of the poorer sort, Lev. xi. 22; Mat. iii. 4, yet it is heavy and burdensome to an old man's stomach.

Thirteenthly, Desire faileth. Or appetite, either to meat or drink, or especially to marriage fellowship.

The latter sort of particular infirmities accompanying old age, are such decays of nature in old men as are found in their decrepit age, when they are drawing on to death, and mourners go about the streets; for they are not called till death, or till entrance into the gates of it.

First, When man goeth to his long home, that is, to the house of his age, the grave, where he shall rest whilst the world standeth, Job xiv. 12.

Secondly, The mourners go about the streets, to wit, the women skilful in mourning for the dead, and that with such affection and gesture and lamentation as to stir up mourning in a whole company, Amos v. 16; Jer. xxii. 18.

Thirdly, Or ever the silver cord be loosed, that is, the marrow of the backbone, which runneth from the brain through the neck to the bottom of the back, through twenty-four joints, and takes in therewith all the sinews; whence followeth a shaking and trembling of all the joints, and utter feebleness to use any limb without help, ver. 6. Or rather the sinews, which are the ligaments of all the members, and loosened by cold humours and palsy distempers.

Fourthly, The golden bowl is broken. When the skull is parted in the sutures or seams of it, whence the chaps fall, the almonds of the ears are stopped, part lifting up again.

For the Hebrew is the same with Golgotha, which signifieth a skull, 2 Kings ix. 35; Mat. xxvii. 33. It is a bowl because it is round, and golden, both for the colour and for the precious use of it, to contain and preserve the brain.

Fifthly, The pitcher broken at the spring, that is, the bladder is broken at the spring of water; the

issuing forth of the water, or the retentive faculty of the muscle at the neck of the bladder being broken, so that water (urine) issueth from him insensibly without stay.

Fifthly, The wheel broken at the cistern, is the lungs broken off from their motion of inspiration and respiration by phlegm from the stomach, which is as the cistern from all the body. The lungs are as a wheel transmitting the air in and out, up and down; but though there be no open passage between the stomach and the lungs, (and therefore is no ordinary purging of the lungs, but upwards by spitting and coughing,) yet when the stomach is surcharged with phlegm, it distilleth it unto the lungs and stoppeth them. Look as when a man or beast is dead, there seemeth no way of entrance into the bladder for water; no, not for air (for if you blow it full of wind, none will issue out;) and yet whilst there is life in the body, both water and sand pass through little veins into the bladder; so by the like secret passages doth the cistern of the stomach convey phlegm to the lungs, even to the stifling of them. And upon this stoppage of the lungs with phlegm, that the wheel cannot turn the air (or breath) up and down, in and out, followeth rattling in the throat, breaking off the motion of the lungs, and so death suddenly followeth.

Doct. 1. The wisdom of God would have young men to take particular and special notice of the decays and infirmities of old age, and by all and every of them to be stirred up to the remembrance of their Creator in the days of their youth. Solomon, the eldest son of wisdom, reckoneth up these infirmities of age, not to shew his skill, but to teach us to discern these, and to provoke us by every one of them, and much more by all together, to remember our Creator early.

Reason 1. From our backwardness to take notice of these decays in ourselves, much less in others, and most of all in our young time, when there are no cords in our death, Hosea vii. 9.

Reason 2. From the unlistness and undisposedness of old age to attend spiritual duties in the midst of bodily infirmities; as in Aaron in like bitterness, Lev. x. 19, and in the Israelites in anguish, Exod. vi. 9.

Reason 3. From the unsupportable wearisomeness

of these evils unto old age, when it is not eased and supported by grace.

Use 1. To shew us the many bitter fruits of the sin of our first parents, even to our bodies, 1. Death; 2. Strong cords to death.

Use 2. To teach us both the lessons Solomon here calleth upon us to learn: 1. The remembrance of these infirmities; 2. The remembrance of our Creator by them, and that in our youth, before they befall us in age.

Obj. But what can these crosses, and the remembrance of them, do to a kindly work of conversion? They are all but punishments of sin, and so sanctions of the law, and the law maketh nothing perfect, Heb. vii. 19.

Ans. First, Yet no commandment of God is vain, when the Spirit co-worketh; secondly, These infirmities, as the law itself, drive us to Christ, Gal. iii. 24; and he, 1. Taketh away our sins, John i. 29. 2. Beareth our infirmities, Mat. viii. 17; Ps. ciii. 3; and he supporteth us in them, Isa. xli. 4, and xl. 28–31. 3. He reneweth the inner man with proportionable strength and comfort, 2 Cor. iv. 16.

Use 3. To comfort godly old men, in that God taketh particular notice of all their decays and infirmities.

Ver. 7. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Coherence, see in ver. 2. In these words are set forth, first, The first and last condition of the body, in regard of its material cause—dust returneth to the earth, out of which it was taken. Secondly, The first and last condition of the soul, in regard of the efficiency, cause, and disposing hand—the spirit returneth to God that gave it; meaning dust, by a metonymy of the material cause for the effect; dust for man's body made of dust, Gen. ii. 7. Return to the earth, first, By burial in the earth, after the manner of the Jews; though in burning and drowning it finally returneth to dust, to earth also. Secondly, By rotting in the grave, and dissolving to earth at last.

Spirit; soul, as being here opposed to the body. Returneth to God. Not every soul to dwell with him, for here the speech is of all men; but to be

disposed of by him for his final estate. That gave it, first, By breathing it into his face at the first creation; secondly, By forming every soul of a sinful matter of the souls of the parents, or of the spirituous part of their seed, Zech. xii. 1.

Doct. 1. As our bodies, being made of dust, do in death return to dust; so our souls, being given us of God, return again to God, Gen. ii. 7. The body is made, not of the heart of the earth, that is rich in metals, not of the soil of the earth, that is rich in fruits, nor of the sand of the earth, which is profitable for ballast, for hour-glasses, or for a sea bound, Jer. v. 22, but of the dust of the earth, which of all the rest is most unprofitable, like unsavoury salt, Mat. v. 13. Stones are firm matter, clay tough, but dust easily dissipated and scattered with every blast of wind.

Obj. But is not our body mixed of the four elements?

Ans. Yes. *Reason* 1. For all these are found in us; our spirits are fiery, our breath is airy, our blood and humours watery, our flesh and bones, muscles and sinews, have much earthly matter in them.

Reason 2. We are nourished by all these elements.

Reason 3. We are dissolved into all these elements. But yet God first took dust, then wetted it and made clay of it, and fashioned it into the form of human body; hence, Job iv. 19, the first foundation and matter was dust, clay made of it, and our bodies of clay. Dust only is expressed, as being first and predominant.

Use 1. For instruction to all men: first, To behold God's wonderful power, wisdom, and goodness, who out of a dust-heap hath formed such a curious and glorious work, Ps. cxxxix. 14. All the devils in hell cannot suddenly make a louse of dust, Exod. viii. 18, 19; and Moses and Aaron did make but lice of dust, ver. 17. Secondly, To be lowly and humble-minded, especially when we come in God's presence, Gen. xviii. 27; Isa. xlv. 9; 1 Kings viii. 27. Thirdly, To be mindful of our mortality, Gen. iii. 19. Every blast of God's displeasure scattereth our dusty tabernacle, even of great men, Isa. xl. 15, 23, 24; and therefore to remember our Creator, and prepare for a change, Eccles. xii. 1, 7.

Use 2. For comfort to the godly, first, He will

not deal with us after our sins, Ps. ciii. 13, 14; secondly, To encourage us against the fear of men, whom the moth shall chavel to dust, Isa. ii. 7, 8. To strengthen our faith in God's power to raise us, 1. Out of outward abasement, 1 Sam. ii. 8; 2. Out of inward abasement, Ps. cxix. 25; and 3. Out of the grave, Dan. xii. 2. Our bodies shall return to dust, that is, they shall die, corrupt, and return to dust, Gen. iii. 19; hence, Job xvii. 13, 14, xxi. 26, and xxiv. 20, it so falleth out to great men, Ps. lxxxii. 7, and mean; wise men and fools, Ps. xlix. 10; rich men and poor, Ps. xlix. 10, 16, 17; good men and bad, Ps. xxx. 9; and all men, Job xxx. 23; Isa. xl. 6, 7; except only Christ, who saw no corruption, and so no dust, Acts ii. 31, and such as remain alive at the last day, 1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thes. iv. 17.

Reason 1. From the wages of sin, Rom. xv. 12, &c.

Reason 2. To root out the root of sin, Rom. vi. 7. Original sin is fitly compared by Epiphanius to a wild fig tree, rooted in the joints of the stone wall of a goodly palace. If it be cut and lopped, as it is by repentance and mortification, yet it sprouteth again; but when the walls are taken down, and the stones cast asunder, body and soul parted, then being built again, the root is shaken out utterly.

Reason 3. To prepare the bodies of men for an immortal estate, 1 Cor. xv. 50.

Use 1. To refute the vanity of carnal minds, who think to escape this common condition of all men, Isa. xxviii. 15, 18.

Use 2. To exhort to the remembrance of our Creator, and to prepare for a change. Here we have no abiding city, we seek one to come, Heb. xiii. 14; we are but tenants at will, our tabernacles earthly.

Use 3. To strike terror into the hearts of the wicked, who return to dust, now accursed after the fall, Gen. iii. 17, 19. It is now the food of the serpent, Gen. iii. 14, and it is meat and drink to Satan to torment the wicked, who are accursed from God, and so depart, Mat. xxv. 41.

Use 4. To comfort the godly in distress, Job iii. 22. Art thou in sickness and pain? thou art but grinding to dust, and then ease. Art thou grieved with a body of sin? Rom. vii. 24; dust will set thee free. Dost thou desire to be dissolved and to be

with Christ? Phil. i. 23; dust will dissolve thee, and be a friend of the bridegroom to bring thee to Christ. The soul of every man is God's gift, Gen. ii. 7; Jer. xxxviii. 16; Zech. xii. 1; Heb. xii. 9.

Reason. From God's immediate hand put forth above the means in making the soul in the body, which though it be not by creation of nothing, yet it is by efformation of pre-existent matter, whether of the spirituous part of the seed, or the souls of the parents, see notes in chap. xi. 5.

Use 1. To employ the soul in God's service, to which end it was made, Prov. xvi. 4; yea, to return it to him with advantage, Mat. xxv. 27.

Use 2. To feed it with spiritual food, as word, sacraments, &c., for it is a spirit.

Use 3. Then God may take it again at his pleasure, Job i. 21. At death the soul returneth to God again, Luke xxiii. 43, 46; Acts vii. 59.

Reason 1. From the account to be made, and the reward to be received.

Use 1. To assure the immortality of the soul, and to reprove the brutish ignorance of such as consider it not, Eccles. iii. 21.

Use 2. To exhort to prepare for this return, and therefore to remember our Creator in the days of our youth.

Use 3. To comfort the godly in assurance of their return to God at the last.

Ver 8. *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity.*

In these words Solomon repeateth the conclusion of the whole book, which he laid down in the beginning, chap. i. 2, and hath proved by sundry arguments throughout the book, especially by an induction of many particulars. And now having finished his proof thereof, and demonstrated, last of all, the vanity of childhood and old age, youth and death, he repeateth again his conclusion, as that which he hath fully declared, vanity of, &c.

Doct 1. The whole estate of the creature from first to last, and the whole estate of man from his childhood to his old age, yea, to death itself, is a state of excessive vanity, vanity of vanities, university of vanities, Rom. viii. 20.

Excess of vanity; or therefore it is called by a not *vain*, but *vanity* itself, yea, vanity of vanities;

which is a superlative vanity, as *holy of holies* is a superlative holiness. Vanity of vanities, for it is vanities in the plural number; vanities of many sorts; university, or universality of vanities. All is vanity. The universality of all creatures is vanity, and all vanities is found in the creatures. The vanity the creature is subject to is called the bondage of corruption, Rom. viii. 20, 21, which is not meant of natural corruption, such as might be in beasts before the fall; for when generation was to be, there was to be corruption; but would have been no vanity, because the creature had then finished his work, as the silkworm, after a sort, hath done, and so departeth. But he meaneth a corruption that fell upon the creature by the fall; which is a corruption, 1. Through enmity of one creature against another, when they also suffer most, that are most innocent, Job xii. 7, 8. 2. Through their inward debility or infirmity: whence, first, Their often abortions both in cattle, women, fruitful trees, olives, vines, and figs casting their fruit. Secondly, Their labour to bring forth what fruit they do yield, even beyond their strength; whence necessity in the soil of lying fallow, in living creatures of barrenness, Gen. iii. 17, and iv. 12; Lev. xxvi. 20. Only weeds and briers and thorns, and such fruits of the curse, are brought forth with more ease, Gen. iii. 17, 18. 3. Through abuse, by making the creatures the objects of our best affections, Ps. xx. 7; Prov. xviii. 11; Job xxxi. 24; Isa. xlv. 17; Ezek. xvi. 15. Thus we place our sovereign good in the creature comforts, and by making them instruments of wickedness, whether against God or against man, 2 Tim. iv. 10; Jonah ii. 8; Hosea ii. 8; Jer. xxii. 21, 17; Micah ii. 1, 2; Job xxiv. 15, 16.

Reason 1. From the fall of our first parents, Gen. iii. 17, 18.

Reason 2. From the sins of any person or people in succeeding generations, Gen. iv. 12; Lev. xxvi. 19, 20.

Use. See in notes on Eccles. xi. 7.

Ver. 9. *And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.*

From this verse to the end of the chapter is the

conclusion ; which consisteth of two parts : first, An encouragement to the reading of this and other books of Scripture, from ver. 9-12 ; secondly, The sum or scope and use of this and the other books of Scripture, to fear God and keep his commandments, set forth and confirmed by a twofold reason : first, From the complete duty of man ; secondly, From the exact judgment of God, ver. 14. The former of these, to wit, the encouragement to the reading of this and other books of Scripture, is set on by seven arguments : first, From Solomon's improvement of his wisdom to teach the people knowledge, and that proportionably, according to his wisdom. The more wise the preacher was, the more he taught the people knowledge, ver. 9.

Secondly, From the elaborate diligence in pondering or weighing, seeking out, ordering fit matter or words.

Thirdly, From the matter and frame of his words. They were words, 1. Of knowledge. 2. Of weight or power ; the word signifieth to rule or have authority, as if the words were fit to command faith and obedience, ver. 9. 3. Acceptable words ; words of delight, ver. 10. 4. Upright. 5. Of truth, ver. 10.

Fourthly, From their efficacy, as, 1. Goads ; 2. Nails, ver. 11.

Fifthly, From their authority. 1. Ministerial, fastened by the masters of assemblies ; 2. Principal or sovereign, given by one pastor, ver. 11.

Sixthly, From their sufficiency : of these, my son, be enlightened, or admonished, ver. 12.

Seventhly, From the vanity and wearisomeness of reading many other books, ver. 12.

Doct. The more wise a governor, or ruler, especially a preacher is, the more he teacheth the people knowledge. If it be read, Because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge, it comes to the same issue ; for if the wisdom of Solomon caused him to teach the people knowledge, then the more wise a man is, the more his wisdom will incline him to teach men knowledge. But in Solomon's phrase it is used in way of comparison, as Eccles. ii. 15 ; however this is evident, it is the wisdom of a ruler, especially of a preacher, to teach the people knowledge, 2 Chron. xvii. 7-9 ; Col. ii. 1, 2 ; 1 Cor. x. 1, xii. 1, and xiv. 18-20 ; 1 Thes. iv. 13 ; 2 Pet. iii. 8 ; Jer. iii. 15.

Reason 1. From wise men's knowledge of the excellency of knowledge, which ignorant men know not, and therefore regard not, Prov. i. 22 ; Eccles. ii. 13, 14, and vii. 12 ; Prov. xix. 2 ; Hosea iv. 6 ; Isa. xxvii. 11.

Reason 2. From their calling. They have a pastoral charge of the people, yea, of the souls of the people ; rulers, Ps. lxxviii. 70-72 ; 2 Sam. xxiv. 17 ; preachers, Heb. xiii. 17. God giveth to none power of the bodies of his people, but he giveth them also charge over their souls, see ver. 1.

Reason 3. For regard to their own comfort. Ignorant subjects will be either, 1. Rebels, and unruly, 2 Chron. xv. 3, 5, 6 ; 2. Flatterers, Hosea vii. 3, 5. 3. Barbarians. Ignorant people will be either, 1. Unprofitable hearers, Jer. v. 3, 4 ; 2. Persecutors, which is worse, Acts iii. 17 ; 1 Tim. i. 13.

Use 1. To teach all men of wisdom that have people under them, whether in church, as preachers ; commonwealth, as magistrates ; family, as parents, masters ; that it is a part of your wisdom to teach your people knowledge ; and the more wisdom, the more to teach them knowledge. Preachers, Jer. iii. 15 ; magistrates, as before ; householders to their wives, 1 Pet. iii. 17 ; children, Eph. vi. 4 ; Deut. vi. 7 ; servants, Gen. xviii. 19 ; schoolmasters and tutors, Prov. xxx.

Magistrates teach knowledge, not only as Solomon here, by writing, but first, By providing and sending forth good ministers, 2 Chron. xvii. 7-9 ; secondly, By erecting and publishing good laws, Deut. iv. 5, 6, especially for the free passage of true religion, Ezra vii. 23 ; thirdly, By removing stumbling-blocks (teachers of lies) out of the way, 2 Chron. xvii. 6 ; fourthly, By punishment of evil-doers, Judges viii. 17, 16 ; Prov. xix. 25, and xxi. 11 ; fifthly, By ferment and encouragement of well-doers, Prov. xxii. 11 ; Ps. ci. 6 ; sixthly, by example, Ps. cxii. 1, 2.

Ministers teach knowledge, first, By dispensing ordinances, Jer. xxx. 15 ; secondly, By exemplary conversation, 1 Tim. iv. 12. Householders teach by catechising, Prov. xxii. 6 ; wholesome discipline, Prov. xxix. 15 ; and godly example, 1 Chron. xxviii. 19.

All of them teach by maintenance of schools of good learning, Acts vii. 22, else knowledge is more hard to be attained, John vii. 15.

Use 2. To teach people to be as willing to learn knowledge, else how shall others teach knowledge ?

Use 3. To teach us what is indeed knowledge ; to wit, such things as Solomon taught, Prov. ix. 10 : as, first, The vanity of the creature, especially of a man's self, by nature, as in Ecclesiastes ; secondly, The precious sweetness of the love of Christ in the Canticles ; thirdly, The right ordering of commonwealths or families, as in the Proverbs, chap. ix. 30.

Ver. 9. *Yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.*

Ver. 10. *The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words ; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.*

Solomon in teaching the people, he sought out, and weighed, and set in order words of weight and delight, words of uprightness and truth.

Solomon, though a wise man, none like him, yea, though immediately inspired by the Holy Ghost, yet he set all his logic awork in teachings and writings to the people. For whereas there be three acts or exercises of logic : 1. Invention ; 2. Judgment ; 3. Method ; and in these three the whole work of logic is accomplished ; Solomon set all these awork to find out a fit matter and words for the instruction of the people. *Investigavit*, he sought out, is the work of invention ; *libravit*, *trutinavit*, he weighed, as in a balance, is the work of judgment ; he set in order, is the work of method.

Words of weight, מְשָׁלִים, proverbs ; that is, words of weight, of power, of authority, such as are apt to sink, not only, like David's stone, into the forehead of Goliath, but into the heart of the stoutest.

Reason why so called, from their effect, first, As convincing and pressing down a proud spirit, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5 ; secondly, Lifting up a humble spirit, Isa. lxvi. 2, and l. 4 ; thirdly, Directing and ordering their own lives and others, Ps. cxix. 125. Words of delight, or acceptable words, not to the humours of the people, but, first, To the good pleasure of God, Gal. i. 10 ; secondly, To the estate of the people, Gal. iv. 20.

Reason 1. As being most suitable to the image of God in his children. These words are as a seal, their hearts as wax ; for all delight springeth from correspondency between the faculty and the object.

Reason 2. As making us men of delight, first, To God ; secondly, To our brethren, Ps. xvi. 3.

Words or writings of uprightness or righteousness.

Reason 1. As suitable to God's will, which is the rule of right.

Reason 2. As aiming at right ends—the glory of God, the good of churches, commonwealths, families, souls.

Reason 3. As making us upright.

Words of truth :

Reason 1. As proceeding from the Spirit of truth.

Reason 2. As speaking of all men's persons, estates, of God, his counsels and ways, as they be, without error or guile.

Reason 3. As making us true.

Obj. 1. But penmen of Scripture spake from immediate revelation, 2 Tim. iii. 16 ; 2 Pet. i. 21, therefore not in a way of logical discourse or study.

Ans. It followeth not ; for God breatheth as well in meditation as in sudden raptures, Jude 3 ; 1 Tim. iv. 14, 15 ; 2 Tim. ii. 15.

Obj. 2. Luke xxi. 14, 15.

Ans. It is a word of encouragement to martyrs and confessors that suffer in a good cause, to expect immediate assistance where they cannot well forecast or premeditate to answer to sudden and unknown questions ; otherwise, if a man knew beforehand their interrogatories, it were expedient to study how and what to answer, Prov. xv. 28.

Use 1. To reprove wearisomeness of the instructions taught in this book. When will our teacher have done with this argument, that we might have more of Christ ? But indeed a gracious heart seeth the more need of Christ in the vanity of the creature.

Use 2. To reprove the rejection of studied sermons.

Use 3. To teach preachers the imitation of Solomon in studious invention, judgment, and order of words, first, Of power ; secondly, Of delight ; thirdly, Of uprightness ; fourthly, Of truth, Jer. xlviii. 10 ; Jude 3. Talents should be employed to best advantage.

Use 4. Sermons may be elaborate without quotations.

Use 5. To exhort to the diligent reading and hearing of Scripture. Even Solomon's books, they are studiously written ; they are words of power, delight, uprightness, truth.

Ver. 11. *The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.*

Coherence, see in ver. 9.

Doct. 1. The penmen of Scripture and teachers of God's people were, for their spirit, or gifts, wise men; for their place in the church, masters of the assemblies; and for their calling, given by one shepherd, Prov. xi. 30.

Reason 1. From their immediate carriage by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 21.

Reason 2. From their discerning between the precious and vile, Jer. xv. 19, and applying a fit word to either sort, Isa. i. 4.

Reason 3. From writing and teaching unchangeable rules for all persons in all ages, to which nothing can be added, nor ought taken away, Deut. xii. 32.

Reason 4. From fitness to withstand all oppositions, Luke xxi. 15; Acts vi. 9, 10.

Masters of assemblies, as being first, some of them magistrates, though prophets also, as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Mordecai, Nehemiah; secondly, Some priests, as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, &c.; thirdly, All of them prophets, immediately inspired by the Holy Ghost, and so watchmen set over the flock, Jer. i. 9, 10; Ezek. iii. 17.

Obj. But their place in the church is ministerial, not masterly, 2 Cor. i. 24, and iv. 5; 1 Pet. v. 3.

Ans. True, because, 1. They command nothing in their own name, but Christ's, 1 Cor. iv. 1, but for the church's good, 2 Cor. xiii. 10; 2. But yet in the name of Christ they call the assemblies together, Acts vi. 2; and they rule them, being gathered, with commandments, rebukes, and with all authority, Titus ii. 15. One shepherd is Christ, John x. 11, 16; 1 Pet. ii. 25, and v. 5.

Reason 1. As laying down his life to purchase us, John x. 11.

Reason 2. As providing food for us; leading us into green pastures by still waters, Ps. xxiii. 1, 2.

Reason 3. As healing our diseases, and seeking us out in our wanderings, Ps. xxiii. 3; Ezek. xxxiv. 16; Luke xv. 4, he giveth the masters of the assemblies, Jer. iii. 15; Eph. iv. 8, 11.

Reason 1. As instituting their callings, Eph. iv. 8, 11.

Reason 2. As furnishing them with gifts.

Reason 3. As opening a door for their entrance, John x. 9; Acts xx. 28.

Use. See after the next doctrine.

Doct. 2. The words of Scripture are as goads and nails, fastened or implanted by the masters of the assemblies, given by one pastor. As goads to stir up the people to duty, 2 Pet. i. 13, and iii. 1, and to subdue an enemy; like Shamgar's goad, Judges iii. 31; 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. As nails sticking fast in the soul, Ps. cxix. 93, and fastening us to God, John xv. 9; to our brethren, and to our duties, Neh. x. 29; fastened or planted, as Gen. ii. 8, as if they were not dead, as door-nails, nor dry pegs, or stakes, or nails; but living plants, James i. 21, where his *ἡμετέρας λόγους* may seem to allude to Solomon's *כַּשְׁמֶרֶת* in this place. Ministers are planters, not only in the first gathering of churches, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7, but also in carrying on the rest of the work, as in building. Implanted *implieth*, first, The heart is pierced and cut by the word, as in grafting or planting, Acts ii. 37. Secondly, The word taking root in the heart, wanting in the stony ground, Mat. xiii. 21; not shaken out by wine, music, merry company, building, business, &c. Thirdly, Living in us, Heb. iv. 12. Fourthly, Growing in us, Acts xix. 20. Fifthly, Fruitful in us, Luke viii. 15; Col. i. 5, 6.

By the masters of the assemblies, *implieth* they have a ministerial work in implanting and driving these nails to the head, 1 Cor. iii. 6; 2 Pet. i. 13. These words, and the exciting and fastening power of them, are given by one pastor, to wit, by Christ, as was opened in the former doctrine, Ps. lxxviii. 11.

Reason 1. The word is revealed by his Spirit, 2 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Pet. i. 21.

Reason 2. His Spirit sharpeneth and pointeth it as a goad, Ps. xlv. 5.

Reason 3. His Spirit implanteth and fasteneth them.

Both the doctrines may be thus comprised in one.

Doct. The words of Scripture are the words of the wise, quickening like goads, and fastened like nails; implanted by many masters of the assemblies, yet given by one pastor.

Use 1. See here what manner of persons the penmen of Scriptures and the preachers of them be—to wit, 1. For their gifts, wise; 2. For their office,

masters of assemblies; 3. For their calling, given by one pastor, as in the former doctrine.

Use 2. To teach the masters of assemblies how the word should be handled, wisely according to the sense of Scripture, and to the estate of the people. As goads, 1. Sharply, piercingly, Titus i. 13, quickening a dull spirit, Ps. cxix. 93; 2. Subduing and wounding an enemy, whether lust or gainsayer, (as Shamgar's goad, Judges iii. 31.) 2 Cor. x. 4, 5; Titus i. 9. As nails, 1. Driving at first the sharp but final end into the heart, things that may most easily sink and take place, and enter, Heb. v. 11-13; 2. Following the word with stronger matter, which may hold the heart strongly and closely to God, to brethren, and to duty.

Implanted. This is done by dispensing the word, 1. In faithful simplicity, Jer. xxiii. 28, 29. Human wit and authorities added to it do but adulterate it, like as paint do marble, or as honey and wine in children's milk; as painted glass windows darken the light; as a bombasted sword hindereth cutting. 2. In manifestation of the Spirit, breathing and speaking in the Scripture, and breathing and speaking in the hearts and words and lives of ministers. Hence power, 1 Cor. ii. 2-4; 2 Cor. xiii. 3, 4.

Use 3. To teach us the state of the people without masters of the assemblies, to be wanting, first, In heavenly wisdom, Jer. iv. 22. Secondly, In forwardness; hence need of a goad to prick them forward, Heb. v. 11. Thirdly, In steadfastness; hence need of nails to fasten them, Eph. iv. 14.

Use 4. For trial, when the word hath had his kindly and true effect, and work in us—to wit, first, When it quickeneth us; secondly, When it strengtheneth us; thirdly, When it is implanted in us.

Use 5. To teach us to make use of Christ as our shepherd, whether we be masters of assemblies, or sheep fed by them.

Ver. 12. *And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.*

In these words, as in the former, Solomon exhorteth his son, and in him all his subjects, and in his subjects all Christians, yea, all men, to be admonished by these books of Scripture, whether

penned by Solomon or other masters of the assemblies. See this former argument in ver. 9.

In this verse, first, From the sufficiency of these books: 'By these, my son, be thou admonished.' Secondly, From the unprofitableness and wearisomeness of making and studying many other books: 'Of making many books there is no end; and much study a weariness of the flesh.'

Doct. It is the duty of every son of wisdom to be admonished by the books of Scripture, whether written by Solomon or by other prophets; whether sharpened or fastened by the masters of assemblies, Ps. xix. 11.

To be admonished implieth three things: first, To be enlightened, making the word a light or lantern, Ps. cxix. 105; so the word is translated *shine* as the light, Dan. xii. 3, or brightness. Secondly, To be warned, and so, first, Reclaimed from evil of sin; secondly, Preserved from evil of punishment approaching, Ezek. iii. 17-21, and xxxiii. 4-6. Thirdly, To be made circumspect to duty; so the word is translated *take heed*, Ezra iv. 22, and so used, Ps. xix. 11.

Reason 1. From our relation to God and his prophets. We are their children, they therefore are our fathers: 'My son,' text; Acts iii. 25. God is our father and master, Mal. i. 6, and therefore all his words are warnings, (as of the centurion to his servants, Mat. viii. 9.)

Reason 2. From the benefit of taking warnings, and great danger of the contrary, Ps. xix. 11; Col. i. 28; Ezek. iii. 17-21, and xxxiii. 4, 5.

Reason 3. From the sufficiency of Scripture to that end, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. If they suffice not, none else will, Luke xvi. 29, 31.

Reason 4. From the unprofitableness, or boundless endlessness of reading or writing many books. One book allegeth and referreth to another; neither doth a man studious of books know where to stint himself. Hence falleth in, 1. Vanity, as of many words, so of many books; 2. Impotency of concocting them; 3. Fastidious loathing of Scriptures.

Reason 5. From the wearisomeness of much study to the flesh. It beateth and heateth the brain, it intendeth and stretcheth the mind, as if the body were set upon the rack, yea, sometimes to the breaking of a man's wit, as the string of an instrument stretched

too high or too far. As in wrestling, so in studying, there is a striving, then weariness, then despair of overcoming, then giving over, then taking up, striving again, and so, &c. Much study drieth up the sweetest moisture of the body, whether blood or marrow, consumeth the cheerful spirits, whether of brain or heart, and so breedeth morosity, harshness of spirit, troublesome to a man's self and others.

Use 1. To refute the additions of the decrees of popes, of the apocrypha, of the canons, of councils, of the traditions of fathers to the Scriptures, for the direction of faith and life, Prov. xxx. 6.

Use 2. To teach us what we are without the Scriptures; dark, and want enlightening; stubborn, and want breaking and warning; rash, and want circumspect guiding.

Use 3. To reprove the stubbornness of most men, who will not be warned nor enlightened by the Scriptures, nor made circumspect, Jer. xlv. 16, 17. Such will profit by no means else, Luke xvi. 29–31.

Obj. Yes, by affliction and correction.

Ans. No, not without instruction from the word, Prov. vi. 23. It is a sign God will destroy such, 1 Sam. ii. 25; 2 Chron. xxv. 16; Prov. xxix. 1; Deut. xxix. 19–21. The meanest child that will be warned is better than such, Eccles. iv. 13. A man that will not be admonished will become poor, though a king.

Use 4. To teach such as are to warn others, to warn them from the Scriptures—from every vice to every duty; as Paul convinced the Jews, Acts xxviii. 23.

Use 5. To wean us from the vanity of affectation of much reading.

Obj. Much reading and study, 1. Helpeth a barren wit and weak judgment, by inventing new things, and clearing and confirming the old; 2. Solomon himself wrote many books, 1 Kings iv. 32, 33.

Ans. Solomon's books that were not Scripture are lost, lest we should attribute too much light to them; therefore no books for this admonition in ways of religion to be attended to but the Scriptures; others so far as they explain or apply these.

Secondly, Books for other ends not so much to be sought after for variety, but for choice.

Thirdly, Those books we do use, we should seek to digest them by sound judgment and serious meditation.

Ver. 13. *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*

These two last verses contain a second part of the conclusion of the whole chapter. The former was a pithy exhortation to receive this book, and other books of Scripture penned and opened by the masters of the assemblies, and given by Christ, ver. 9–12.

This latter is a consecratory of the sum and scope of the whole book, which is summed up in these two: Fear God; Keep his commandments. Which is amplified by an introduction calling for audience and intention: Let us hear the end (sum, conclusion) of the whole matter, to wit, of the whole foregoing discourse of the vanities of the creatures, and of all the conditions thereof. And confirmed by a twofold argument: 1. From the sum of man's duty and safety; for this (to fear God and to keep his commandments) is the whole of man, the whole duty of man, ver. 13; the whole safety and stay of man; that which stayeth with him. 2. From the strict exactness of the last judgment, ver. 14.

Doct. 1. It is a conclusion worthy of all attention, that the ends and scope of discovering and discerning all earthly vanities, is to fear God and keep his commandments; the same course John Baptist took to the same end, Isa. xl. 6–8. It is a conclusion worthy of all attention; for Solomon calleth upon himself as well as upon all his people: 'Let us hear,' &c.; as a cock clappeth his own sides with his wings, to stir up himself before he awaken others with his crowing. For clearing this point it would be opened, 1. What is the fear of God? 2. What are meant by his commandments? 3. What is meant by the keeping of them?

The fear of God, it is a holy affection of the heart, whereby we are affected towards God offended with the greatest terror, and towards God reconciled with greatest reverence, Heb. xii. 28; godly fear, Isa. viii. 13; Ps. xc. 11, and cxix. 53; Luke xii. 4, 5; Heb. xii. 28; Ps. cxxx. 4; Exod. xv. 11; fearful in praise, Hosea iii. 5. Hence being

affected to God offended with greatest terror, first, We eschew all sin whereby God is offended, whether man take notice of it or no, Job i. 8, and xxxi. 21, 23. Secondly, No worldly dangers feared so much as God's displeasure, Luke xii. 4, 5. Thirdly, No matter so weighty as to seek Christ, in whom our reconciliation is wrought, 2 Cor. v. 11, 14.

Hence being affected to God reconciled with greatest reverence, first, Christ in whom we are reconciled is most revered and adored, Ps. cxxx. 4, and most closely cleaved to, Jer. xxxii. 40. Secondly, His word most venerable and awful, Isa. lxi. 2; Ps. cxix. 161. Thirdly, Our own ability is distrusted, and we walk in awful dependence on Christ in our whole service of God, Phil. ii. 12, 13; Heb. xii. 28; Rom. xi. 20; 1 Pet. i. 17, 18. Reverence arising from apprehension of his transcendent greatness and goodness, we worship him, and endeavour to approve ourselves to him, to be accepted of him.

2. The commandments, be the ten commandments, Deut. iv. 13, which is further explained in the gospel by believing on Christ, 1 John iii. 23.

3. To keep these commandments is set forth by comparisons; as our way, Joshua i. 7; as our treasure, Rev. iii. 20, 21; as the apple of our eye, Prov. vii. 2; and as our life and soul, Prov. xix. 16; that is, with all diligence, faithfulness, tenderness, and pre-eminence.

Reason 1. From the whole of man wrapt up in the fear of God and keeping his commandments, it is our whole perfection and safety. Life maketh us equal to a plant, sense to a beast, reason to a man, grace (fearing God and keeping his commandments) to angels, Luke xx. 36; Isa. vi. 2; Ps. ciii. 20. It completeth our conformity to the image of God. It is our whole duty, and attaineth an everlasting happy estate, Deut. v. 29, else we walk in vanity, Ps. xxxix. 5, 6, and fear death, hell, the faces of men.

Reason 2. From the vanity of seeking after God's fear, and yet not weaned from the vanities of the world, Mark vi. 20.

Reason 3. From the vanity of weanedness from earthly vanities, without learning the fear of God and keeping his commandments; such was all the devotion of popery, leaving great estates, yea,

kingdoms to live and die in a friar's cowl, Isa. i. 11–13.

Reason 4. Of the attention due to this word and counsel, first, From the dulness of our hearing, Heb. ver. 11; secondly, From the weightiness of the duty, text; thirdly, From the noise of worldly matters and inbred lusts hindering our attention.

Use 1. To refute the Antinomians, who abrogate the commandments, and in sum hold forth grace without Christ, Christ without faith, faith without the word of promise applied particularly to me by the Spirit, and the word of the gospel without the word of the law.

Use 2. To teach us to make these two duties our whole work, Deut. v. 29.

Ver. 14. *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

In the former verse Solomon gave it for a conclusion of the whole book, 'Fear God, and keep his commandments.'

Which duty he presseth by a twofold argument: first, From the weight of the duty—it is the sum and safety of the whole man, ver. 13; secondly, From the universal and strict account which God will take of every work done under the sun, text, ver. 14. So this last end of the book is the last end of the world.

Doct. There is no work, whether it be open or secret, good or evil, but God will bring it to judgment.

No work, whether, first, Of the heart, as counsels, thoughts, affections, 2 Cor. iv. 5; Jer. xvii. 9, 10; secondly, Of the lips, as words, Mat. xii. 36; Jude 15; thirdly, Of the hands, or other outward members of the body, 2 Cor. v. 10; Eccles. xi. 9; Ps. l. 21; not only of all the children of men, but even of evil angels also, 1 Cor. vi. 3.

Though never so secret. ועלם, *absconditum, velatum*, hidden or secret, so the word signifieth; not as the vulgar Latin turneth it, *erratum*, absurdly; for when he saith, *pro omni errato, sive bonum, sive malum sit*, it argueth some *erratum* is *bonum*. But if it be an *erratum*, an error or fault, how is it good? if good, how is it *erratum*, an error or fault? See then their vanity that think the vulgar Latin authentical, or the church of Rome infallible.

God will bring all to judgment. Many things in this world, Prov. xi. 31; Ps. lviii. 10, 11; all things whatsoever at the last day, 2 Cor. v. 10; Rom. ii. 16; Acts xvii. 31; Mat. xxv. 31-46.

Reason 1. It is for the honour of God to rectify all the iniquity of judgment-seats, and other obliquities here below, Eccles. v. 8, and iii. 16, 17, with Micah vii. 3, 4. As his infinite wisdom knoweth all iniquity, so his infinite justice cannot but give due recompense to all.

Reason 2. It is for the honour of Christ, John v. 23, 29. To declare the honour, first, Of his power, in raising the dead by his voice, John v. 28, 29. Secondly, Of his glory, Mat. xxv. 31; all the elements burning about him, 2 Pet. iii. 10; all the angels and saints attending him, each one as bright as the sun, Mat. xxv. 31; Jude 14; a glorious high throne set in the air for him, Mat. xxv. 31; all the creatures presented before him, and bowing to him, Rom. xiv. 10, 11. Thirdly, The honour of his wisdom, in making manifest the secret counsels of all hearts, with all secret conveyances, and that particularly, 1 Cor. iv. 5; Luke xii. 2. Fourthly, Of his justice; both shewing the cause of all his own administrations, why often it went ill with the godly, and well with the wicked, Isa. xxviii. 17; and rewarding all according to their works and the fruits of them, Jer. xvii. 10; which will not be accomplished whilst the world lasteth; neither the good that some have done by their laws, books, counsels, examples, &c., nor the evil of others.

Reason 3. It is for the honour of the church, and of all the godly, 2 Thes. i. 10; Micah vii. 9.

Use 1. For information, first, That the account taken at the last day will be general, of all nations and persons; and also particular, of every singular cause and person, Rom. xiv. 12; Mat. xii. 36; Ps. l. 21; and that not secret, but open, so as all men may judge of all secret conveyances, Luke xii. 2; 1 Cor. iv. 5. Secondly, That the day of judgment will be of longer continuance than a night or day, for so many businesses of all nations and persons cannot be examined openly in the space of a few hours or years; the day of grace is of many years, 1 Cor. vi. 2, so also is that of judgment.

Use 2. To exhort to repentance and faith, that he who shall be our judge may be our Saviour, Acts xvii. 30, 31; 1 Cor. xi. 31; 2 Thes. i. 10.

Use 3. To bridle all licentiousness and boldness in sin, and pleasure in it, Eccles. xi. 9; Acts xxiv. 25.

Use 4. To exhort to sincere and conscionable, awful and fruitful obedience, 1 Pet. i. 17; 2 Pet. iii. 11-14; 2 Cor. v. 9, 10; text, ver. 13, 14; Luke xii. 1, 2; 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Use 5. To exhort to judge others sparingly and charitably, 1 Cor. iv. 5; Rom. xiv. 10; Mat. vii. 1, 2; James ii. 13; but to provoke them earnestly to prepare for this day, 2 Cor. v. 10, 11.

Use 6. To encourage the saints to patience, constancy, and comfort in well-doing and ill-suffering, 1 Cor. xv. 58; 1 Thes. iv. 2, 17; 2 Thes. i. 6, 7.