SINNES
deadly Wound.

ACTS 2.37.
Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts.

Having spoken of the Propheſie of the pouring out of the Spirit in the days of the Gospell, wee come now to speake of the accomplishment thereof, which though it finally intend the Calling of the Jews, yet it is accomplished in the Conversion of those by Peter's Sermon, expressed in the Text.

The whole Booke of the Acts is a Story or a Register of the Acts of the Apostles, that is, of their Sermons, their doings, their workes, whether their Institutions and Ordinances in establishing the Church, or their Miracles wrought to conforme them, or their Journies, or their Sufferings. Therefore if you would read with profit this Booke of the Acts, you are to consider in every Chapter of them therein, what is recorded, such Journies, and such Sermons, such Miracles, and
and such sufferings. These are of singular use of direction for the Church of God.

In this Chapter, there are two Acts described. First, their prophecy with new and strange Tongues, from ver. 2. to the end of the 13. amplified by many arguments, as also by a double effect it wrought in those that heard them. First, anamusement in some, ver. 12. Secondly, others mocked and said, These men are full of new Wine.

The second Act was a Sermon of Peters, upon that occasion, to repel and refute that calumny of drunkenness, which they put upon the Apostles, described from ver. 14. to 36. In which Sermon the Apostle doth prove, that they did not this by the Spirit of the Buttery, or Wine Cellar, but by the power of the Holy Ghost, by a new Spirit of God come upon them, according to what was prophesied in the Old Testament. Now this spirit thus poured out, the Apostle further amplifies and sets forth the giver of it, the Lord Jesus Christ, as delivered into their hands by the determinate Counsell of God, and by them wickedly crucified and slaine, who yet notwithstanding sets forth the same Christ as rising from the dead, and ascending into Heaven, and having received the Spirit from the Father, hee sheds it abroad to the edification of the Church; from whence (ver. 36.) he concludes. Let the whole house of Israel know assuredly, that this Jesus whom you have crucified, is the Lord Christ, that this is the Messiah, whom they have thus crucified. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts. And fee
see then, this Sermon of Peters is amplified by a threelfold effect. First, the humiliation of the hearers, They were pricked in their hearts, ver. 37, 38, 39, 40. Secondly, the Baptizing of 3000. soules, that were converted upon this occasion, ver. 41. Thirdly, the Religious, charitable, comfortable fellowship of those Converts together, ver. 42. to 47.

Wee are now to speake of the first of these effects. And that is the humiliation of the hearers. They were pricked in their hearts; which words containe foure parts.

1. The kind of spiruitall afflliction wherewith they were exercized; pricked at the heart.

2. The effect of this pricking wrought in them, a resignation of themselves to the Apostles counfell and direction, and an humble and reverend request of them to direct them what to doe; Men and Brethren, a word they had not wont to expresse.

3. This humiliation is expressed by the cause of it; They hearing their particular finnes charged upon their soules, hearing it was Christ they had crucified, then they were pricked in their hearts.

4. This humiliation is amplified by the subject persons; those that before were amazed, and mocked, are now pricked in their hearts.

Now of the first; The kind of spiruitall afflliction these hearers were exercised with; pricked in their hearts.

The very first worke of living and saving grace, Doctrine, gives a deadly stroke to the life of sinfull nature.
A Note which I never handled heretofore, but you shall find it evident in the Text, and agreeable to the Principles of Christian Religion. In the Text, these men that were thus pricked in their hearts, had they received any saving grace before? No; Some of them were amazed: Now, amazed hearers, are ignorant hearers, for all amazement springs from ignorance; had they beene the sheepe of Christ, they would have knowne his voyce, Joh. 10. 27. They were also scornfull proud hearers; scorning is a fruit of pride; but this was the time that God intended to shew them mercy. Now then, what is the first grace that is wrought in them? After by hearing they understood, They were pricked in their hearts; not in their eyes onely, to weep for their sines, nor in tongue onely to cry out, but in their hearts; that is a mortall wound to Nature, the least prick of the heart, is the death of nature, be the piercing of it never so little, the sting of a Bee, or the prick of a Needle, the very life of nature runs out, and it cannot possibly be healed: you may prick a man in the tongue, in the eye, and save his life; but once prick the heart, & you give a deadly wound to nature; the vitals waste presently, much ado to sustaine life for a moment. Seethen, this is the first worke of saving and living grace, An heart once pricked can never be healed; and therefore you never reade that God heales mans corrupt nature, He heales not a stony heart, but takes it away, and gives a man a new heart, Ezek. 36. 26. Prick the heart, and it will never leave trickling and bleeding,
Sins deadly wound.

I will further open this point. First, let me shew you what is meant by the heart. Secondly, what by pricking of the heart. Thirdly, the Reason, and then the Application.

By the heart you must not understand, that fleshly part of the body which is the seat of life, called *Primum vivens, & ultimum moriens*. Godly sorrow doth not kill man's bodily life, it works not death, 2 Cor. 7.10. But it is meant the will of a man, which lies in the heart, for as the understanding lies in the head or brain, so the will is seated in the heart: so as a good frame in the heart, and wisdom in the brain, makes a compleat man.

Now this heart or will of a man, is that whereby we choose or refuse a thing, so the heart is taken, Ezek. 36.26. An heart of stone, is a stubborn and obstinate heart or will; an heart of flesh, is an heart that is tractable, and soone pierced; now then this was the piercing of the will of these hearers.

What is it to be pricked in the heart. First, the heart is said to be pricked, when it is afflicted with these two principall affections that are said to wound the heart, the one is sorrow and griefe, and the other is care, 1 Tim. 6.10. Then is the heart pricked, when God afflicts it with sorrow and griefe for sin; griefe for sin, and care for reformation of it. They were pierced with many sorrowes for piercing of Christ, and care to be delivered from that sinne: there are other affections that usually
Sins deadly wound.

usually follow these, as sometimes fear and trembling, Ex. 9.10. Sometimes shame, 1 Cor. 31.19. Sometimes Indignation, 2 Cor. 7.11. But sorrow and care, these most pierce; but these affections never pierce the heart, till first hatred and loathing of sin be wrought in a man, Rom. 7.15. and this springs from a change wrought in the will, which makes us loath our selves for our sinnes, Job 40.3, 4. and 42. 6. And when God gives his people new hearts, they shall loath themselves, Ezek. 36.26, 32. Here is first loathing of sinne, and our selves for sin; from whence springs hatred of sinne, from thence, sorrow, griefe, care, shame and indignation for sin.

Secondly, But piercing also implies something more, as to express it from what Surgeons are wont to say; They say, all piercing of a member, is piercing of the body that is compact together; Dissolutio membris vitalis, is dissolutio compositi. It is a dissolution of the whole frame of nature: If a vitall member be wounded, it is not possible to heale it; it is Dissolutio compositi. They say true, that the heart and braine are the vessels of life, and assoone as one of these vessels are broken, the life of man runs out like water spilt upon the ground, the liveliest spirits soone evaporated, and the life and blood issues, and cannot possibly continue. And to this estate of a man doth the holy Ghost here allude; They were wounded in that part that was most vital, and by this means all that sinfull life, that before was laid up in the stubborne will, begins to trickle downe when the heart
Sins deadly wound.

Heart is prick't, sin is dropping and running out. But which is more, not only sinfull lusts, but all affections to all outward comforts, they begin now to have no minde to any of them, till God gather up their spirits againe; but for the present the world is crucified to him, Gal. 6. 14. Wonder it is to see what little respect a pricked heart hath to the things of this life, as these Converts, ver. 42. 44. they layed themselves levell with their brethren, and now they are for ever at a losse for the world, and all covetous inclinations to the world, they for ever trickle down, that leak is never stopped any more.

3. Look as you see in pricking this bodily heart, a man is presently surpris'd with anguish and pain, and knowes not what to doe, so a man prick'd in the will or heart knowes not in the world which way to turn him; Sirs, what must I doe to be saved? Act 16. 11. he saw now that there was but a step between him and the nethermost hell; and therefore now, Sirs, what must I doe?

Taken from that fellowship that we are to have with Christ in his death, before we can have fellowship with him in his Resurrection, Rom. 6. 3. to 11. The old man must be crucified, that henceforth we may not serve sin, but be free to righteousness, we must die to sin, and then to the world, Gal. 6. 14.

Taken from the good pleasure of God in our first conversion, to espouse and marry us unto his Son, which cannot be till our first husband be dead, Rom. 7. 3. 4. Now, because God intends a marri-
Sins deadly wound.

Age Covenant betwixt Christ and our souls, in first conversion, he will therefore have sin first mortified in us, our first husband mustly a bleeding his last blood before we can be married to Christ.

Taken from the sharp opposites which we in our first conversion have to deal with all. As first we have to deal with the Word of God, and that is sharper than a two-edged sword, Heb. 4.11. It is called goads and arrows, Eccles. 12.11. Sharp and keen arrows, Psal. 45.5. Again, we have to deal with our sins, and that is a sting, 1 Cor. 15.56. And these inflame like venom. Another sharp opposite is the wrath of God, against which it is hard for a man to kick and spurn, Acts 9.5. This is a piercing sorrow, Lam. 3.65. Having thus to deal with these sharp opposites, we must needs be pricked and wounded.

For trial of our estates, whether God hath wrought in us any first works of saving and living grace: Dost thou finde thy will and inclination to die and decay in thee, so as that thou hast no desire or delight in sin? the liveliest spirit thou hast to this or that sin, is now evaporated and wasted, and thy heart is furnished with graces opposite to those sins; then I say, thy heart is pierced and wounded; thou now refusest, loatest, and hatest that sin upon which thy heart was most set, thou grievest for it, and takest care how to be shut of it, abstainest from it, and art ashamed of it: If it be thus with thee, then surely God hath pierced thy heart, and thou art in an estate of salvation; otherwise let me say thus unto thee, A man
man may be pricked in the eye to weep for sin, in the tongue to cry out for sin, in the foot begin to amend his way, & yet not have his heart pricked, nor have any living or saving grace; a man may be fearful of sin, grow more careful of good duties, be more fruitful in good ways, and be not pricked in heart, but only in conscience or understanding; he may cry out of his sin as Judas did, Mat. 27. 4. he thought but to have made a jest of betraying Christ, but when he saw it was the hour and power of darkness that Christ was taken and condemned, then was he pricked in conscience and cried out bitterly, and now would have no reward for his treason; he was pricked in his hands, feet, tongue, and eyes, and conscience; But was this any good evidence that he was pricked in his heart? No, for he goes on still to choose sin; had his will been pricked, he would never have hanged himself; in such a case a man may finde a sin too sharp for him, and yet all be but anguishes of conscience, the heart still ready to choose another sin, but that is an ill signe; a man may sometimes be pricked in his shoulder, as Herod was, Mar. 6. 20. reforme many things, yet still cleave to an Harlot; John shall rather die, then the vitall spirits of his sin shall perish. If this be thy case, then flatter not thy selfe, thou art yet in the gall of bitterness; Thou sayst thou art heart-whole, thou thankest God, but the more is the pity; if thou best heart-whole after so much sickness, and crosses, and afflictions, and sins, This is a miserable wholenesse. For had saving grace seized up-
Sins deadly wound.

on thy will, thy heart would have been pierced & broken; but if a man's heart come to look at all sin as bitter, he doth not baue any sin, his heart chooseth sin no more; if he see it is a sin, his heart recoyles back again, and closeth not with it; if there be no sin, but thy heart runs from it, and thy affections are dying and decaying towards them all; then though it may be thou canst not weep so much as some men can doe for the very prick of conscience, nor art so forward in some duties as some are, who are but very hypocrites, and cannot cry out so much as some can, yet if thy heart be dead to all sin, thou takest no pleasure in any, but they are as bitter to thee as gall and wormwood; Then God hath shed abroad the first work of saving grace in thy heart, and it will continue, and this is no small matter of consolation.

verse 2. A direction and advertisement to such as yet finde their hearts whole and unbroken; Take heed how you content your selves in such a condition. Consider what our Saviour said to Saul; It is hard to kick against the pricks, to dash the naked soule against the curse and wrath of God is an hard businesse, and so it is for these men, to persecute the Lord of life to the death; but many a man that goes on in sin, faith, he feelles no such hard work in sin, but thou wilt feel at the last, that it hath been but dashing against pricks, and if not in this world, then with more horour in another; you little know what anguish of soule for sinne meanes; Can you provoke God to anger, and
Sins deadly wound.

and not your selves to confusion:

Of exhortation to every soule that is in any measure pierced in heart with sense of sin; Think not thyself undone, judge righteous judgement, or if it be the case of any of thy friends, say not they are undone, he hath now no mind to the world; but not so, if with pricking of conscience, the heart be pricked too, then feare him not, God will gather up his spirit to his calling again: If therefore your hearts be broken, bless God on that behalf, it is the best newes that ever came to you; When God comes to redeem a sinner from sin, and the punishment of it, he will not content himselfe with the conscience, or mouth, or eyes, but the chief part of the soule must lie at stake for it, before him, he will have sin bleed to the death. When God had threatened Nineve with destruction, it would not have prevailed with God to prevent the punishment, if all the Harlots of the Countrey had come and humbled themselves before him, but the King must humble himselfe to the dust: The heart of a man is the principal faculty of the soule, it rules all, it sets hand and tongue, all within, and all without a work. Now because the will is principal in the soul, then if God meane we shall be saved, he will have the principal part of the soule to lie in the dust, the liveliest corruption must trickle downe upon the ground, therefore be content to stoop to it, and be glad you may.

To teach Ministers not to be afraid sometimes of driving mayles to the head, not to the consciences,
ences, but to the hearts of sinners. There are a generation of Preachers that would now have no Law preached, but now onely to draw men on to Christ, by the love of Christ. It is true, this we should labour to doe, but how must we doe it? Doe you think God will marry us to Christ, before our first husband be dead? unless the sinfull hearts of men be pricked, unless the proud, wanton, and stubborn heart be pierced and wounded to the death? Therefore there is no hope of salvation unless it be thus with you. Why, you say, But he did but here preach, and they heare the Gospel. It is true, I grant a man may preach the Gospel, and wound mens souls as much as by the Law, but yet know this: he preached the Gospel legally, not the promises of the Gospel, but the duties of the Gospel, and their sins against the Gospel, convincing them that they had sinned against the Lord of Life, and Glory. This is preaching of the Gospel legally, and a speciall meanes to pierce the hearts of men.

Of consolation to all those soules that have found their hearts pricked. Many a soule is troubled because it cannot weep for sin, but if you can but finde your hearts broken and departing from sin, if your hearts fit loose from sin, and refuse all sin, one sin as well as another, if God give thee a heart to avoid sin, and to doe that which is good in his sight, if the life of thy fin decayes, then blessed art thou of the Lord, Christ hath set his stamp upon thee, and will challenge thee for his owne.

This
This may serve for an use of exhortation to every soule of us whose soules have been pierced and pricked, that you freely let them run and bleed still; never daub up the wound, let it for ever be bleeding; pray not so much to God for the healing of your hearts, as intreat him to create a new heart in you, Ezek. 36.26. By no meanes restraine the issue of sin, but if your heart be once pierced, let it then for ever bleed. So farre as terrores may hinder the peace of your consciences, labour to heale that; But you that love the Lord hate evil, Psal. 97.10. Bee sure you for ever keep the heart open to any charitable employment, for the refreshment of your poore brethren, as these pierced hearts in the Text did, they distributed what they had according as every man had need, and they were then full of the holy Ghost, and did eat their bread, not with churlishnesse, but with gladnesse and singlenesse of heart. What would it profita man to win the whole world, and to lose his own soule? Consider it therefore, so much as God hath pricked thy heart, so much it fits loose from the world; an heart once pierced would think it a base part to talk of charges when it comes to lay out its estate for his brethrens necessities; Therefore let your hearts for ever run freely to all good offices in the behalfe of your brethren.
Now when they heard this, &c.

E E come now to a second point here expressed from the effect of this pricking of the heart, it wrought in the hearers: They said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we doe? From whence observe this note:

Doctrīne. That it is a good evidence of an heart pricked and sprinkled with a saving and kindly sense of sin, when we be given to love and respect those Christians, whom we have despised, yea even such as have wounded us, and are willing to enquire of them the way of salvation, and to resign up our hearts to be directed by them.

I put all these together, because they are all included in the effect which this pricking of the heart wrought in these hearers. You see that whereas before they derided them, v. 12. 13. now they have laid aside their scorning, and now come to them with respect and reverence, Men and Brethren: See what a sudden change is wrought in them, now they think the Apostles know the way better how to be saved then themselves, and let the Apostles say but what they would have them to doe, and they are willing to be directed by them;
them; they bid them repent and be baptized, and they did so, and there was added to the Church three thousand soules. See what a worke a prick-ed heart will reach to; In such a case, a man will lay downe all his scorn ing, and fall to reverencing them, whom they had scorned before; now they resigned themselves wholly into the hands of these men, to set them a course to be saved.

Take a man whose heart is pricked, and he present ly finds such anguish in his principall vitall parts, that he forthwith cryes out for help; See, my life lyes a bleeding, what might I do, if it were possible to save life? These men at first, did not a little wonder to heare the Apostles speake with strange Tongues, ver. 12. and mee thinks it is as great a wonder to see this sudden change (by a word speaking:) See in them, what a new tongue, a pricked heart will worke. The same men that even now said, the Apostles were full of the spirit of Wine; now they speake the language of Canaan: before debaucht Ruffians; now, Men and Brethren; A word, they had not beene won- ted to: they that before mocked at new Tongues, had now themselves gotten new Tongues; and it was a greater Miracle to have such words in their mouths, then to heare the Apostles speake all the principall Languages in the world. A man may have all gifts of Tongues, and yet his heart as corrupt as ever; but if the heart be pricked, he knowes now how to say, Men and Brethren, what shall I doe to be saved? here is a worke that men may wonder at. The like you see in Paul, when...
convinced, Acts 9.6. Who art thou Lord? He could then acknowledge him for a Lord; And now Lord, What wilt thou have me to do? And though our Saviour tell him not what to do, he sent one to him; yet before Ananias came to him, (for he came not till three dayes after) Paul had learned what to doe: he that had beene a blasphemous wretch, behold now he prayes, and so hath done three dayes and three nights together. What a blasphemer got a tongue and an heart to pray? see what a pricked heart can doe; now therefore stand and wonder at it; Lord, faith Ananias, I have heard of much evil that man hath done; It is true, but talke no more of that, Now he prayes, and I will shew him, what great things he shall suffer for my Names sake: here are the compact vitals of nature dissolved, & grace springs afresh. So the Jaylor, Acts 16. He scourged Paul and Silas, made them full of wounds, put them in the dungeon, set their feet in the stocks, but ver. 29.30. when he thought they had escaped, and had like to have killed himselfe, Paul cryed out unto him, and that word so pierced his heart, that he comes in trembling; and now, Sirs, What must I doe to be saved? And he beleued immediately, and was Baptized; and such a wonderfull change doth a pricked heart make; of those very men, whom before he scourged and put in the dungeon, now they are kings, Lords; any reverence now little enough to shew them, such worke makes a pricked heart where ever it is.

Reaf. 1. Taken from the glorious presence of God, a pierced
pierced heart finds in those that have beene the Instruments of their wounding, which binds a man hand and foot, and so dazels him that he knowes not whither to goe from them, nor can he seeke for other helpe, 1 Cor.14.3. 24, 25. Being convinced by you, he will fall downe and say, God is in you of a truth. See what a presence of God, a soule discernes to be in them, who have convinced it of sin, hath layed open the secret closet of his soule, they see there is the gate of Heaven. These men, though at first they little thought it, yet they now see, God is there of a truth; had not God directed them, they would not have hit our heart so right; Thou hast the word of eternall life, and whither should we goe? 10b.6.68. The Woman of Samaria, though at first she scoffed, yet when she perceived Christ was a Prophet, 10b.4.17.20. then she fell to question him, about the maine point of Religion, and leaves him not, untill she be setled in Gods peace, because she saw Gods presence with him.

Taken from the attractive drawing power that 10as.2. is found in the word of truth, and goodness of the Gospell of Christ, what ever it takes hold on, it drawes it after it, and therefore is compared to a draw Net, Mat.13. Luke 10. And it is said of our Saviour, the people heard him attentively, Luke 19.48. In the Original all it is, They hung upon his lips; What he spake, was as so many drags to draw them to hearken to him; and especially the Gospell of Christ crucified, 10b. 12. 32. These words have a mighty drawing power, it is the na-

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sins deadly wound.

Reaf. 3. Taken from the secret hope which God doth instill into the hearts of all such as are pierced, that there is a way for their healing, though they know it not; they have an opinion, that those that wound them can heal them, and most likely to supply them with helpe. *Hos* 2.14,15. He will speake to her heart piercing and sinking words, and will give her the valley of Acheron for a doore of hope. That was the Valley where *Achan* was stoned to death, *Joshua* 7.24,27. It signifies trouble; so that even the Valley of trouble, when God speakes trouble unto his children, hee gives them hope of deliverance from their very troubles; so that when a man's heart is cast downe, God casts threatnings at us, as stones about our eares, yet this Valley of trouble, God gives us as a doore of hope. See by the Ninevites, *Who knows but God may save us?* *Jonas* 3.9. They conceived a possibility that God might be content to pardon. 

Vse 1. To shew there is a difference between a prick-ed heart, and a pricked conscience. Generally Christians confound these two, and shuffle them up together, as if they were both one, but indeed they much differ; and without a discerning whereof, many a poore soule may be swallowed up, either by dispaire on the one hand, or presumption on the other; it is one of the hardest points in the practice of Christianity. Now therefore observe the passage of Gods grace in the hearts of his people. Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.
1. Effects.

They differ in their

2. Causes.

about which

3. Objects, they are conversant.

4. Remedies.

First, See their difference in the effects betwixt a pricked heart, and a pricked conscience.

There are four effects in which they differ.

First, The pricking of the heart doth soften and sweeten the heart, to a wise amiableness, and loving respect unto those that have pierced them, and to all such as they bee, and drawes them to an earnest desire of fellowship with them. These men in the Text, they were pricked in their hearts, and to whom did they goe for remedy? not to the great Rabbins of their times; should not the Priests lips preserue knowledge? Mal.2.7. Were they not better studied men, and better read in Moses and the Prophets, then these new Disciples were? No. But they rightly discerned these were not the men that could any way help them, these men had set them a worke to crucifie Christ; the Priests had persuaded them to aske Barabbas, and to crucifie Jesus. Now they seeing their hearts pierced, for doing what the Priests bad them do, it was not likely they should heale that wound, but should rather daube with them, and tell them, Christ was but a deluder, and that they had done well to hang him up out of the way; therefore now, they will not come at them: and there is not indeed a more evident signe that a mandallies with his soule, then when he goes away from those.
those Ministers that have wounded him, and advis'd with others that will deal more favourably with him, and take counsel of them who are guilty of the same sinne themselves; but these poore men wisely discerned, that the Scribes and Pharisees are not for their purpose, but these men that wounded them, were the most likely to heale them; they looke not at them as their enemies, nor doe they contest with them; what meant they to be personal in their application; but these looke not at it as the wound of an enemy, but as a brother, Men and Brethren. But now in case the conscience alone had beene pricked, why then a man, by his good will, would come no more to such men as have wounded him, and it will be a burden to him, if by his calling he be forced to live under such a Ministry: Eliab his Ministry wrought upon Ahab, to cause him to humble himselfe, 1 King.21.29. but did he now love Eliab the better, or any such as Eliab was? No; he never met him, but with some base salutation; Are thou he that troubles Israel? 1 King.18.17. and chap.22.8. Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And when he had a weighty business in hand, did he send for Eliab to counsell him? No; when he calls a solemn Synod of foure hundred Prophets, Eliab is none of them I warrant you: and if but one Michael, he hates him; and why so? because he never prophesies good of him. So that when Ahab is onely pricked in conscience, he will not send to Eliab for counsell, but if any man wound him, he shall be the man of his hatred, he lookes
lookes at such as wound him, as if hee stabbed daggers at his heart, and foure hundred men shall be sent for, before one of them. Saul was often pricked in his conscience, and therefore when an evill spirit of bondage came upon him, and vexed his conscience, and David came into play before him, to mitigate the sense of anguish, he thought with a Javelin to have nayled him to the wall; a prick of conscience is fierce and furious, full of folly and desperate madness. Felix is content to heare Paul Preach, and trembles to heare him press such arguments, Acts 24. 25. A wound there was in his conscience, but what came of it? Why, goe thy way, faith he to Paul; and when I have convenient time, I will send for thee; but he never heard him more: This is the manner of conscience struck with feare, and griefe; A rotten heart, and a pierced conscience ever goe togetherr.

A second difference in the effect is this. Take you an hart that is pricked, and it is wrought to a weaned affection, from not onely inordinate affections, to the profits and pleasures of this world; but in truth sometimes, from the lawful use of lawfull things; it will take off the largeness of a mans heart from any outward comfort, Psal. 102. 4. His heart was so smitten, that he forgot to eat bread; so as if his Wife and Children should not come and pray him to eat, he would neglect to eat; his heart is smitten, he knowes not what to doe; as these men here in the Text, no minde to any worldly thing, now fell all they have, and be helpfull.
full to their poore brethren, weaned from all the comforts of this life. But take a man with a prick-ed conscience onely, and he is so far from being weaned from this thing, as that he will plunge himselfe deeper into them; he thinks that if he fill himselfe with business, or merry company, it will drive away heart qualmes; as Cain to marry-ing, and then to building of Cities, Gen. 4. 17. Saul to Musique, 1 Sam. 16. 17. A pricked conscience for the most part, leaves a man more eager after the world, which a pierced heart dare not meddle with; he finds he hath sinned bitterly against God, and now God hath forsaken him, and therefore unless he can see Gods favour vouch-safed to him, he can finde no relish in any thing under Heaven, he goes about any business like a man without an heart. And as a pricked heart is thus weaned from outward comforts, so especially from sin, which a pierced conscience will never weane a man from: A pierced heart lets out the heart blood of sin; Hos. 14. 3. What have I to doe any more with Idols? Yea a pierced heart so far fals out with his sin, that he hates the very occa-sion that may bring sin into his mind, it is loathsome to him; as a man that hath drunk a cup of poyson that almost killed him, he ever hates, not only the poyson, but the very cup in which it was brought to him: so is it with a man that hath beene pierced in heart for sinne, he not onely throwes away the Idols, but the costly coverings, Esay 30. 22. How pleasant soever such things were to him before, yet now he loathes and hates them all. But
But now take a man that is but pricked in conscience only, it makes him more desperately sinful. *Jer. 2. 25.* They have loved strangers, and after them they will go; as men sometimes wounded in conscience, he finds plainly, such whoredome and drunkenness is the way to damnation; but well, if I must be damned, let me be damned for something; if I must be damned for hating God and his Ordinances, I will hate them yet more. *Saul* was sometimes wounded with *David’s* kindness, *1 Sam. 14. 16.* He melts (as sometimes a pricked conscience will doe at a Sermon) and wept, so as you would have thought his heart had melted, but it was but only his conscience that was pricked; *David* durst not trust him for all that: And shortly after that, *Saul* went out with three thousand chosen men to take him; *David* againe had him in his hand, *1 Sam. 26. 1, 2.* then his bowels melted againe, and he was wounded, and tells *David* he would not hurt him, but it was no trusting of him notwithstanding; This *David* feared, that he should one day perish by the hand of *Saul, chap. 27. 1.* So that a man may be pricked in conscience, and daube it over againe, and be never a whit the more weaned from sin by it; whereas now these men that are pricked in heart, will they ever crucifie Christ againe, or joyne with hypocrites against the people of God more? No; They will rather sell all they have, and give to the poore members of Christ, seeing they have pierced their head and Master, now let all goe, We must take another course: But a pricked
conscience will close with sin again upon the next occasion. It may be he will vomit all out, confess it all, but when once conscience is quieted upon this confession, he will take up the same wickedness again.

A third difference in the effect is this: The pricking of the heart humbles a man's spirit, so as now he is content to stoop to his underlings, though contemptible to him before, yet now willing to be taught by them; These men in the Text enquire of the Apostles the way to salvation. Apollos doubtless was a man pricked in heart, when he stoopes to learn of a poore Tent-maker and his wife, Acts 18.26. But take you a man pricked in conscience, he is like the Scribes and Pharisees, when the blinde man answered them with a mighty power of a gracious spirit, and set them to the wall, that they knew not what to say, they said, Thou art altogether borne in sin, and wilt thou teach us? And thereupon they excommunicate him, John 9.34. When a poore Christian is able to teach great Scholars their owne experiences, they will not endure to be taught by them; A prickt conscience is proud and stubborn, and will not stoop to deny it selfe so much, or stoop so low, as to be taught by such Leather-coats & fawcy Tradel-men; These are proud conceited men; onely a prickt heart can tell how to come to poore men, with a Men and Brethren; You are acquainted with sorrow for sin, and have known the terrous of the Lord; What shall such a one as I doe, that I might be saved?

4. Ano-
4. Another difference in the effect is this: These men being pricked in heart, it did open and enlarge their hearts, to be willing to doe or suffer any thing, that these Apostles shall direct them to. They knew them not to be Apostles, they knew they were Fishermen, poore meane men, yet to these men they came, and that with an enlarged heart, 'Men and Brethren, what shall we doe?' Set us but a course, and we will follow your direction; Say but what we shall doe, and we are for you; So it was with Paul, he was a man that had great priviledges, a Pharisee, an Hebrew of the Hebrewes, a man unrebukable, touching the righteousnesse which is of the Law; but when once his heart is pricked, I count them all but losse and dung; he was not at a losse to part with any thing for Christ, Phil. 3. 8. and Acts 20. 21, 22. I passe not at all, though I know bonds and afflictions abide me everywhere; They shall neither hinder his course, nor his joy in his course; See the frame of a pierced heart, there is nothing to be done, nothing to be suffered; he passe not if he doe any thing, if it shall be to labour and suffer more abundantly then they all, 1 Cor. 15. 10.

This is the case of a pierced heart; but will a pricked conscience doe as much? A conscience only pricked? For so you must understand, conscience lies in the judgement, as the will doth in the heart, if the heart be pricked, then the judgement and conscience is pricked also; but the judgement and conscience may be wounded, and
yet not the heart; you may lead a wounded conscience a good way, but not farre enough. There comes a rich young-man to our Saviour, and he would know what he might do to inherit eternal life, Matth. 19.17. to 22. The Commandements he had kept from his youth, a signe he had made conscience of his wayes. But now Goefore all that thou hast, and give to the poore; and our Saviour calts not every rich man to this, but he was pleased to try him, had he offered it, as a man whose heart had been pricked, he would have let all goe, had it been thousands for his hundreds, but his conscience being onely pierced, he was sorely put to it, and went away sorrowfull, had his heart been pricked, he would have neglected his daily bread, his estate, wife, children, and all he had: Matthew the Publicane, he suddenly leaves all, and followes Christ, Luke 5.28. Zaccheus gives away half his goods, Luke 19.28. But this young-man having but onely his conscience pricked, fee how strait he is, fee how closely he girts to himself the comforts of this life. So Ananias and Sapphira doubteles they were pricked in conscience, for otherwise they would not have given up their names amongst the Disciples, but because their hearts were not pierced, they kept back part of their estate, they could not tell how to live upon the Almes-basket wholly: Consider therefore of this thing, they are points you doe not usuallly reade or heare of, and yet of due and serious consideration, and such as unlesse you wisely distinguish in the particulars of them, you will be much deceived.
Sins deadly wound.

ved in the estate of your own hearts; take heed you rest not in bare conscience work, without all heart work; here are new foundations and principles to be laid; you have heard many precious differences between worldly and godly sorrow, but this is somewhat a distinct sorrow from worldly, for this is spiritual sorrow: though you have spiritual sorrow, and spiritual paine, yet this is not it you must satisfy your selves in, for by reason of the piercing of your conscience, your spirits may be put to much exercise, and yet the heart not so much as touched, and leave thy condition very dangerous.

Acts 2.37.
And when they heard this, &c.

Now we come to speak of the difference betwixt a pricked heart, and a pricked conscience, as they differ in their causes. The pricking of the heart is the immediate work of God himself; He keeps that in his own hands to temper the hearts of the sons of men, especially in this kind when it comes to piercing and wounding.

Hosea 13.8. You would think it were the stroak of an enemy; I will meet thee as a Beare robbed of her whelps, and I will rend the cause of thy heart; and left you should think God did this in wrath without. The difference between them should be strictly observed. The first ends in life, the last in death.
out mercy, reader. 9. Oh Israel thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help. God goes about a work of salvation, even then when he teares and rends the heart: so that look whatever lies most close and nearest a mans heart, when God comes to save, he will make a man sit loose from that which before he could not be reclaimed from; he will not suffer anything to harbour there, that shall lift up itself against him, Ezek. 36.26 and Pro. 21.1. He turneth the heart which way soever it pleaseth him:

Men may change our minds, by giving us better reasons for things then we discerned before, and may alter our judgments and opinions by strength of Reason, or affection to the contrary, but no man is able to change the heart but onely God: He hath his chaire in Heaven, that speaks to mens hearts; but for pricking the conscience, the Devils can reach that, and so can his Instruments. Notable is that place, Revel. 9.1. to 6. It is a lively description of the Friers & Priests of the Church of Rome, being let out of the bottomlesse pit of ignorance and darkness, in which their Religion was hatched; they had a mighty power, by pressing the terrors of the Law, to worke terror upon the consciences of their hearers, who thereby were so stung with fear of hell, that they longed for death rather then life; and willingly gave away all that ever they had, under pretence of saving their soules by the merit of their good workes; this was nothing but a worke of Satan, setting on their Ministry upon the consciences of the people: it was Satan, I doubt
doubt not, that vexed the conscience of Job, Job 13. 14. 16. Job applies it to God, as if he had spoken bitter things against him; but the truth is, had God done it, it had beene by a spirit of bondage; now the children of God receive not the spirit of bondage to fear again, after they once know God to be their Father, Rom. 8. 15. If therefore Job, or any other true Christian, as David, or Hezekiah, complains of their estates, it is not from God, but from Satan; it is usual with Job to ascribe that to God's hand, which indeed was Satan's, at least immediately, as the loss of his children and cattle; & so it is in this case: It is true, Satan's work was directed by God; but otherwise it is possible for Satan so to buffet our minds, by representing to us the number and burden of our sins, and so to hide the face of God from us, and the promises and former experiences, as that we can see nothing but wrath and enmity in the presence of the Lord, though even then God's favour was towards Job as much as ever: He is one and the same and changeth not, only he suffereth Satan to cast a mist betwixt the face of God, and the conscience of Job. Conscience may be stung when the heart is not, but still as it was before, and neither better nor worse for this work of Satan.

Thirdly, As they differ in the effects and causes, so also in the object about which they are covetant. When the conscience is only prick't, you shall hear him expresse himself: on this wise; O will the conscience say: What, honourable here, and miserable for ever hereafter? Rich here,
Sins deadly wound.

here, and for ever rejected hereafter? Beautiful
here, and burning for ever hereafter? pleasant
and cheerful full here, and for ever in torment here-
after? Such burthens the conscience lays upon
the soul of such a one; All the complaint of
conscience will never looke farther then the
wrath of God, present anguish, and feare of future
wrath in another world. *Did you ever know any*
sorrow like my sorrow? Lam. 1.12. This is the com-
plaint of a pierced conscience; Never saw you
creature in such anguish as I am. But take a pier-
ced heart, he rests not in these complaints, (though
these he have) but it will turne the course of these
complaints quite another way: He complaines
after this sort; Did you ever know (will he say) a
soul followed with so many mercies, so much
honour, and wealth, and peace, that ever was so
unthankfull as I am: whom God hath followed
with so many crosses and sicknesses as I, and yet
continue to this day so stubborn as I have done?
Did you ever know any that ever had such expe-
rience, and made a profession so long, and yet no
more assured of salvation then I am? Did you
ever know any that was redeemed by the blood
of Christ, that yet to this day lives a slave and serv-
vant to so many strong and noysome lusts; such
pride and prophanenesse, and senselessnesse of
heart? Did you ever know any that hath been
called to grace, so carried captive to the things of
this life, as I am? Did you ever know any fall a-
gaine and againe into the same sinnes, as I have
done? Did you ever know a poore creature that to
this
this day can pray no more feelingly, nor receive no more believingly, then I do: So as there is a broad difference in the object of their griefe, a pierced conscience grieves for sense of anguish, but a pierced heart, chiefly for fulnesse of sin, and weakness, and want of grace. If complaints be onely in regard of the terrors of God, it is to bee doubted there is nothing but a pierced conscience; a pierced heart issues out more sensible expostulations to God, & confessions to their brethren.

Againe there is this difference in their complaint for their sinne, as well as for their griefe. If a pierced conscience complains of sinne, it onely complains of such sinnes as puts him to present anguish, as it was with Judas, Mat. 27.4,5. had it bee ne any more, he would have complained of murder, and despaire of mercy &c. but he rushes upon selfe murder, and despaire. Now had a pierced heart complained, it would not onely have complained of treason, but of the pride of its heart, that would not suffer him to be patient under Gods hand; a pierced heart complains of one sin as well as another, and eschewes one sin as well as another, Psal. 119.128. I hate every false way; He counts all the words of God to be most pure, and what ever crosses the word of God, that he hates.

Finally, they differ in their cures and remedies, a pierced conscience may be cured sundry wayes, by which a pierced heart cannot.

First, a pierced conscience may be cured by store of worldly businesse and cares, and sensual lusts; the
the Thorny soyle went beyond the stony: the thorny soyle was pierced, Jer. 4. 3. A man may be humbled in conscience, so as you would think he made conscience of all his wayes, but in the end the world choakes him, Luke 8. 14. But all the blessings of this world cannot choake an honest and a good heart, Cant. 8. 7. Though he be compassed about with abundance of honors and pleasures, he can find no comfort in them, till God have healed his heart.

2. Sometimes prickees of conscience will bee healed by tract of time. Ahab for three yeares durst not undertake any warre, because of the threatening of the Prophet, 1 King. 21. 29. and in the first warre he made, he dyed, 1 King. 22. 1. His conscience was now daubed and smothered; tract of time wil sometimes heale such anguishes. So Saul, 1 Sam. 24. 17, 18. and chap. 26. 2. but it is not so with a pierced heart, it never leaves braying after the Lord, Psal. 42. 1, 2. and 84. 3. and 34. 5, 6. My soule is athirst for God, He will wait, till his day come, Job 14. 14.

3. Againe, conscience may be healed by the performance of some duties; sometimes conscience checks a man for such and such sinnes, and for the neglect of such duties, now it will not let him rest till such sins be laid aside, and such duties performed. Herod reverenced John, and heard him gladly, but yet the pierced heart is not satisfied in any duties, though sometimes of humiliation, seeke him in every Ordinance, in season and out of season; yet the good soule will still seeke Christ,
Sins deadly wound.

Christ, and never leave till she find him, Cant. 3, 1, 2, 3. An heart wounded will never be healed, but by the same hand that wounded it; not so a prickt conscience. But when I say a pricked conscience will be healed, I speake not properly; its true; sometimes a man is said to heale a man that kills him out-right, he sees no more paine; so a man while conscience is dead, lyes wounded with the sting of sin, in sense of the displeasure of the most High. Conscience may fall into the hands of such worldly business, &c. as may kill a man out-right, and conscience stirs no more; only a pierced heart is sensible, into whose hand soever it falls; it is not healed by anything, but by the blood of the blessed Redeemer, and the life of the Spirit of grace, enabling him in some measure to walke before God in the land of the living.

Of exhortation, to every Christian that knows what it is to be pierced in heart, to pity the estate of such poore soules, as know not in the world what to doe; if you see the bodily heart wounded, and the man wounding and dying, how ready will every one be to run any way to helpe him? when we see his countenance changed, his spirit sinking, and the whole man falling flat downe, every one would gladly take any course to helpe him: Truly there is not any poore Christian, but when he comes home to God, is in this very case; heart dejected, spirit cast downe, much adoe to cry for mercy, ready to complaine to any; How should this stir us up in such a case, to be helpefull to them to our best endeavours? If wee saw our enemies
enemies. If we falling under his burden, we ought to help him, \textit{Deut. 22.4.} and shall we see our brethren and sisters fall under the burden, not only of an accusing conscience, but of a wounded heart? the Lord speaks terror and wrath, and lays the burden of a man's sin upon his back; then \textit{Have pity upon me oh my friends, for the hand of God is upon me;} In such a case, the complaint of the soul may be more than ordinary, for his pain is more than ordinary, for he considers the hand of the God of all grace against him. Now alas, where shall I find grace, if the blessing of God be turned against me? Where should a poor soul look for blessedness? So as Job had good cause to call for pity; how barbarous is the practice of such, as instead of helping up such poor Christians, will reproach them and say, See now what you have got by gadding to Sermons, and keeping such company; you should have pitied yourself; Could not you have regarded your own welfare, and have lived neighbour-like; but you must fall a praying, and a pondering; but see what it comes to now. Oh wretched creatures, if the Devil himself were clad in flesh and blood, what more desperate words could he use then these? Consider you that fearful place, \textit{Psal. 69. 22.23. to 26.} It is a fearful curse the holy Ghost denouncest against such men. \textit{Let their table become a snare;} and that which should have been for their welfare, let it be a trap; \textit{add sin to sin;} and let not them come in thy righteousness. \textit{And wherefore is all this? why, ver. 26.} They have
have persecuted him whom thou hast smitten; If God have wounded a poore soule, and thou addest to his grieafe, it brings an heavy curse of God, not onely upon thy selfe, but upon all thy goods, lands, and estate, and soule too; Take heed therefore how you speake to the grieafe of such wounded soules. Reade also Deut. 25.17, 18, 19, 20. Remember what Amaleck did to thee in the day when thou camest out of Egypt, how he spoiled them that were feeble and weake with thee, therefore blot out his remembrance from under Heaven, Exod. 17.16. All things fell out to them in Types; Amaleck was the first that fell upon the people of God, and because he fell upon the feeblest and weakest, therefore the Lord will have warre with him for ever; Israel his coming out of Egypt, is but a Type of Gods people comming out of sin, and passing through the red sea of Christs blood, and going through the wildernesse of temptations; and if Amaleck was so cursed for hurting the weake amongst them; If then you see any fall soule upon a weake hearted Christian, while he is yet raw and greene, the Lord will have war with such a man and his posterity, and will cut him quite off.

Of reproofe to such as were never yet pricked in heart or in conscience; If they that are pricked in conscience fall short of truth of grace, what will their case be that never yet were so much as pricked in conscience: you have many men so far off from being pricked in either with sense of sin, as that they take pleasure in sin, they spend their dayes.
dayes in pleasure, and never felt prick in either heart or conscience for sin; some say, let us fill our selves with sin, for to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant; Come let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall dye, Essay 5 6 ult. Others there are that are so wholly taken up with the businesse of this life, that they thanke God they never knew what scruple of conscience meant, but they have kept a constant tenor of cheerfulness all their dayes. How lamentable is the case of such men, when as many a poore soule by remorse of conscience hath beene knocked off from many sins, and yet fall short of salvati

on; it may be by the Lawes of the Land, or for finifter respects they refrained a little, or for conscience sake, not many times one of a thousand can say, he hath refused any sin, 2 Thes. 2 12. That they all might bee damned that had pleasure in unrighteounesse; It is a sad and a heavy speech, hee faith not, that all unrighteous men shall be damned, for who is he but is unrighteous in some passages but he that takes pleasure in unrighteounesse, it is the comfort of his soule, to riot in all manner of excess, and commits all sin with greedinesse, this is their doome, that all might be damned.

There are another sort here to be reproved, that have sometimes bee pricked in conscience; and when they should have come on to timelier healing, have left quite off, and are come to this resolution; They thanke God they are now got out of such heart qualmes, and they will now bleffe themselves from such company and occa-

sions,
Sins deadly wound.

Sions, as might put such trouble of conscience upon them, but will this prove a safe course think you? If you see a woman with child come to her travaile, and her pangs grow strong, if afterwards she leave off, and settle her selfe, you conclude her child is dead, and it will much indanger the mother; so if God have sometimes given us to come to pangs of new birth, and to feel many piercings of conscience, and give great hopes that the Lord Jesus is forming in such a soule, and might it cease, doubtlesse so it would be, if you give over and desire to settle, when it is high time you should be delivered in such a case, not one soule of a thousand ever comes to live in Gods fight. Let therefore no man thinke himselfe in a safe condition, if he have neither come to heart nor conscience piercing.

And yet another sort is reproveable, who have some pricks of conscience, and so continue some pretie time, by some duties of humiliation, and onely rest there, and goe no farther. Conscience stings bitterly, and it must needs fall to such duties, as fasting, and prayer, and this a man is willing to stoope to, and thereupon he continues in such duties, and makes account that will serve the turne to stop the mouth of conscience: and what will this doe? If afterwards a man take as much liberty to sin as ever before, and walke in no more feare of God, and love of the brethren then before; this is the most fearefull delusion the poore foule can be expolde unto, that a man should set up his rest here to stay, and never consider, wheth-
ther his heart loath sinne more then ever before, and therefore take heed wee rest not in any such works as these.

To every soule of us that hath found his heart come to a better frame, if ever God hath brought your hearts to any kindly pricking for sin, rest not till you may truly say, there is no Christian man but you count him your brother, rest not till you can looke at all the children of God as thy brethren and sisters, who have most wounded and pierced thee, let thy heart most esteeme them, give not over till thou haft struck a Covenant with every soule, that knoweth what it is to be pricked in heart, and be willing to consult with thy brethren about thy spirituall estate; It is true, sometimes a child of God may keepe his conception long very close, the Prodigall had none to consult with, but he said within himselfe. You have some Christians, especially such men as have knowledge and parts, have not need to complaine so much, nor to aske such counsell, as thole that are ignorant, they know their unworthinesse of any mercy from God, and they goe to God, and fill heaven and earth with cryes and groanes; but you rest not till you find God answerings you with the testimony of his favour, but if you doe not know what to doe, then rest not till you have got some to advise you. Take up this example from these ignorant people, and the Gaoler,

And further come unto God, and Christian friends with a resolution and purpose of heart, that
that whatever God calls you to doe, or suffer for his names sake, you will not faile to doe it, but set your selfe about it.

If you bee come thus far; then it is a word of everlasting consolement to such as can find in this manner their hearts bowed to this gracious frame of spirit. If God hath thus kindly pierced thy heart, it is a good signe that he will finish this worke in thee. You say, But may not a man have his heart pierced, and yet sit loose from his brethren, and sometimes looke at those as his enemies, that are his nearest friends: and may he not sometimes start back from doing or suffering that which God calls for: is it not possible a man pierced in heart may doe thus?

Answ. It is, but it is ever true, that those men whose hearts are pierced may be too blame sometimes herein. Such a thing is not impossible, and would it were not over usuall; for many times the issues of corruption are stopped and they cease bleeding, and then it is wonder to see, how they can forget their brethren and sisters, and they are now toyled and tumbled in the world, that they are not able to do and suffer the will of God; and though such may have comfort in their hearts that have beeene pierced, yet they ought to keepe the issue of their corruption alwaies open: It is therefore for such to renew the piercing of their hearts, and that by wisely applying every word of God to them. Learne to know your brethren and sisters, and to follow after God in the use of every Ordinance, you shall not finde a more
more comfortable evidence of your good estates before God, then when you keepe a fresh within you the love of your brethren, and finde your hearts inwardly cleaving to every good duty, and to be ready to doe and suffer anything for God; keepe this frame in you, and then feare not, you will have comfort in your way in the end.

ACTS 2. 37.
Men and brethren what shall we doe, &c.

Now come to the third Argument by which this humiliation is described. When they heard this, that is, when they heard Peter particularly apply the Doctrine he had delivered; let all the house of Israel know assuredly, &c. Then they were pricked in their hearts.

Doct. 3. The pricking of the heart is wrought by hearing the word of God, applied to the convincing of our soules, both of our particular sins, and of the greatnesse and goodness of that God, against whom we have committed them.

This may be of use to us all, that desire to have our hearts pierced effectually and savingly, When they heard this word of the Gospell that Peter had preached touching Christ, and heard Peter touch their particular sinn against Christ; they so heard the Word, that they were convinced of
their particular sins against Christ, and they were also convinced of his greatness and goodness; God hath made him Lord, advanced him to sit at his own right hand, and to his goodness they have killed, and crucified the anointed one of God, this Jesus whom you have crucified. God hath made him Lord for his greatness, and Christ for his goodness. And when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts. So then, there are three things go to the kindly piercing of a man's heart; First, Hearing the word; Secondly, Conviction of a man's particular sins; and Thirdly, A sight of the greatness and goodness of that God whom we have pierced.

First, Hearing the Word; it hath pleased the Lord much to delight in this Ordinance, and to make it only a principal sovereign means for the piercing of the hearts of his people; Hence it is, that the Word is called Goads and Nails, Eccles. 12. 11. God hath set an edge upon the Word, and given it a piercing power; the Word is called a two-edged sword, Heb. 4. 12. A sharp and a keen Arrow; God hath given the Word a piercing nature. But how is it, or why doth God make his Word so piercing?

By ordaining the breath of the Word, to be the Real breath of the Spirit; whenever his word is dispensed he will accompany it with the breath of his own Spirit, which sets an edge upon it, so as they shall sink deeply; It is the Spirit of God that gives it a point, and this God hath vouchsafed to his whole Word, both Law and Gospel.
and therefore the Gospel is called the ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3.8. and the Law, the ministration of condemnation, ver. 9. So that if a man speake Law, he not onely tells a man of condemnation, but hee ministers it unto him; so as a man seeth plainly, he is in no better case, then in an estate of condemnation; and so the ministration of the Gospel by the Spirit of holiness, assures a man of his righteousness by Jesus Christ, Gal. 3.5. God hath ordained, that together with the word, the Spirit should be dispensed, whether a man preach Law or Gospel.

And this upon a threefold ground.

First, By this meanes God doth most suitably answer the creation of the world, in the new creation of decayed corrupt nature; By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, Psal. 33.6. What, will the speaking of a word make a World? No; A vanishing word will not; but if God put in the breath and worke of his Spirit, then the world is made, Gen. 1:1,2,3. and God hath ordained, that when he would come to repaire decayed nature, by the same meanes by which he made the world, by the same will he repaire it, and therefore in his name must the word bee spoken, and by the breath of the Lord, a Congregation is gathered together, & Christians established in grace, and all the host of them, & now all things are become new; If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. How comes it to passe, that the word lights on me, first to wound me, and then to bind me up? Why, the Lord hath created the fruit of the lips to bring
bring it to passe; Here was a small worke, the breath of a Fisherman to convert three thousand soules, a thing unlikely by the power of nature; but if God set in with him, then there is a creating worke of God, and now such soules cannot rest, till they find rest and peace in God.

Secondly, God by this meanes doth convey an Antidote or preservative into the hearts of men, by the same meanes which Satan at the first did infuse his venome into our first Parents; Did not he seduce them by the hearing of the eare, the breath of the Serpent poysoning their hearts, with unbeleefe? God therefore that sent Chrift to dissolve the cursed works of Satan, untwists this worke againe by a savoury and wholesome worke of his Spirit, by conveying it into our minds, and judgements, and consciences, and so dissolve the cursed worke of Satan.

Thirdly, God therefore doth it, that he might confound all the wisdome of the Orators, and Philosopher, and wise men of the world, 1 Cor. 1.21. It pleased God by the foolishnesse of Preaching to save them that beleue; all the learned Philosopher could never convince a man of a sin, they could sometimes perswade men by morall persuasions, but they could never pierce their hearts, nor teach them the knowledge of Chrift; God hath made them all fooles in that behalfe, that to the faith of Gods people might not stand in the wisdome of men, but in the power of Gods grace.

Rom. 10.14, 17.

But have not men sometimes beeene pierced by the

Answer. The works of God doe sometimes work especially to the piercing of the conscience, but not so usually to the pricking of the heart; but if they doe, yet they doe it as sanctions of the word, as they are confirmations and seeds of the word, they may drive in some word wee have heard closer and nearer to the heart: Iosephs brethren could not be ignorant of their sin against the life and liberty of their brother; now they comming into a distress, it sets on what they knew before. So it is likely the Jaylor had heard Paul speak something, else how came he so readily to ask the way to salvation? Sometimes indeed where ordinary means faile, God his Spirit can do it alone, without the breath of the word, but this is the ordinary way.

But secondly, There was more then hearing the word; the word was applyed to the conviction of their particular sinne, by which means their hearts came to be prickt: it is the nature of the word applyed to convince a sinner, that thou art the man; so these hearers, they knew assuredly, that they were guilty of that sinne. 2 Sam.12.7, 13. Samuel would convince them of that very sin above the rest, of chusing them a King, 1 Sam.12. and thereupon they confessed it. So Judges 2.2.4. when they saw they had gone against Gods charge, in that particular sin, that wounded them to the heart. So when our Saviour would take
the Woman of Samaria from scoffing, he convinced her of her particular sins, John 4:14, 15, 16. this made her say, Sir, I perceive thou art a Prophet, and then questions with him about Religion; had she beene prickt in conscience onely, she would have quarrelled with him, what had he to doe with who kept her company, but a pierced heart is of another temper.

The reason of this is taken from the confusion of heart and face which is wrought in a soule by convincing it of its particular sinne, as to express it thus, Josephs Butler charged Iudah and his brethren, that they had done ill to take away his Masters cup; why, say they, with whomsoever it is found, let him die the death, Gen. 44.6, 12, 16. now when he searched and found the Cup in Benjamin's sack, then say they, What shall we speake unto my Lord? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants, behold we are my Lords bondmen; here is the Cup found amongst them; Benjamin he is guilty; and now they know not what to doe or say: Just thus hath God purued us to the stand, and finds the Cup in our sacks mouths; this or that very wickednesse is found in the mouth of my sack; in my soule, and in my hand; then we are set to the wall, and our hearts blush within us; What shal we now lay to the Lord, or how shal we excuse ourselves; now wee see wee are sons of wrath, children of death: As a thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel, being found pilfering the glory of God, and giving it to the Syrians, and Egyptians, Jer. 2.26. This prepared the woman that was
taken in Adultery, to receive a word of comfort, *John 8. 4.* Hee seeing her face and heart so ashamed of the business, had no heart to speake an ill word to her; now he was not wont to daub up any in sin, but it is to shew you, that particular application puts a mans hand in his bosome, and takes him just in the very act of some sin, this puts such confusion of heart and face upon him, as that it makes him very fit for a word of comfort.

3. All this will not yet worke, unlefe it be applied to a mans particular sin, as against that great and good God, against whom they are wrought. The Lord hath made him whom you have crucified, a Lord for greatnesse, a Christ for goodnesse. Now that the knowledge of sin against the greatnesse of the Lord, doth so pierce the heart, it is evident by the paines that God takes to pull downe the heart of Job, when he would have him to renew his repentance, *chap. 38,39,40,41.* and convinces him, that hee hath beene quarrelling against God, and God followes that argument, to shew the glory of his mighty works, and that wrought upon him, for faith he, *Behold I am vile,* once have I spoken, yea twice, but I will proceed no farther, *chap. 41. 1,2,3,4.* and *chap. 42.6.* When he remembers the word of God to him, and God had convinced him of his glorious Majesty; now faith he, I repent and abhor my selfe; and when God would pierce Sauls heart, how doth he it? *Acts 9. 54.* Why persecutest thou me? He shewes him his glorious Majesty, and then all astonished, he
he fell downe and said, Lord, what wilt thou have me doe?

And as thus his greatnesse, so his goodness is of mighty power to convince: I delivered thee, saies God to David, out of the hands of Saul, and gave thee a Kingdom, and if that had beene too little, I would have given thee more; and why haft thou then despised the commandement of the Lord? 2 Sam. 12. 7,8,9. This so wonderfully wrought upon him, that thereupon he penned the 51. Psalm. So Deut. 32. 6. Doe you thus requite the Lord, O yee foolish people and unwise; Is not he the God that hath nourished and brought thee up? It pierces the heart to consider that we have sinned against so good a God.

Why his greatnesse?

There is a double worke in this. First, terrifying the conscience, and shewing us the fearefull danger of sin. Secondly, it discovers to us our owne vilenesse. So was it with Joseph his brethren, when they saw him whom they had sold for a slave, was now advanced to this greatnesse, they could not answer a word; they were terrified at his presence; and that made Saul to tremble, Acts 9.3,4,5,6. So Job he was struck in the like fort. But secondly, it works in a man sense of his owne vilenesse, I abhorre my selfe in dust and ashes, Job 41.2, and 42.6. The greatnesse of Gods glorious Majesty doth so affect us, that wee are sensible of our owne vilenesse, that we should offer to exalt our selves against the most High, this will so confound a man with sense of his owne vilenesse,
Secondly, So God's goodness.

Reas. 1. Because it shews us the despicableness of our danger, to sin against a great God, is great danger, but yet there may be a remedy, but to sin against a good God, that makes our case desperate, as thus, When a man's heart is convinced that he hath sinned against a good God, he sees he is now separated by his sin, from the goodness of that God in whom all his help do lay. Esh. 59. 2. and Jer. 5. 24, 25. If a man sin against God his preserver, who shall then preserve him? If he sin against the God of grace and peace, where shall he find grace? 2 King. 9. 22. Thou hast sinned against the God of grace, and what hast thou now to do with grace?

It convinceth us of the more vileness of our sins, to consider that we have sinned against a good God. These things chiefly make sinne vile; The folly, the unkindness, and the dishonesty of sinne.

First, Folly will shame a man much, 2 Sam. 24. 10. Deut. 32. 6. Now when a man sees he hath sinned against a good God, he sees himselfe a notorious foole; foolish creature I, thus to sin against a good God!

Secondly, The unkindness, the ingratitude, and the unmannerliness of a sinn, it makes a man blush, and to be inwardly confused, Ezra 9. 6, 9, 10. Have not we cause for ever to be confounded, and hast not thou cause to be angry with us, till there be no remedy? ver. 13, 14.

Thirdly,
Thirdly, The dishonesty of a sin, shames us much, Jer. 2.26. Two things are dishonest, theft, and whoredome; now both these we have committed against a good God, Jer. 3.20, to 25. These doe all pierce the heart,

First, it shews how farre off they are from salvation, and their desperate condition, that despite to heare the word of God, and seeke not to him that they might be saved. Thou dost not love to heare the word, then thou lovest not to have thy heart pierced; Salvation is farre from the wicked, because they seeke not thy Law, Psal. 119.155. They love to be farre from the word of salvation, and then salvation is far from them; The word is the power of God to salvation, Rom. 1.16. And he that turnes away his cares from hearing the Law, even his prayer shall be abominable, Prov. 28.9.

Suppose we live under the word and heare it, then we must desire that the word may be applied particularly, and personally, against our particular and personall corruptions, Psal. 141.5. Let a righteous man apply the word particularly unto me, and pierce my heart, it will not kill my soule, nor hurt my body, but will heale both soule and body, to immortality and glory; Many men could willingly heare a Minister flourish out a Sermon, but they care not for the word to come neare them, but consider, you cannot more manifest to God and your brethren, that your hearts are naught, then when you will not be convinced of your particular sins. The sword of God, take it as it lyes in the word, and it is like a sword in the
the scabberd, and the exposition is but the brandishing of it; but when application is made, that thou art the man that hast done this, not to endure this, is an argument of a carnall heart, though sometimes even God's own people, does not love to be particularized; when you are in this temper, you are sinking down to harshness of heart, it was Asa his case, 2 Chron. 16.9, 10. an evident forerunner of harshness of heart and unbelief: it is a wonder to see the loose corruption of our hearts, yea faith one. Such an one was met with to day; we can tell where the word hits another, but take nothing to our own particulars; but if another man was hit in his right vein, and thou escape, what comfort can that be to thy soul? his corruptions by that means issue out, and they are healed, and thou camest as deadly sick as he, and thou not once looked at; and wilt thou gratifie thy selfe in this, that God should think good not to speake one word to thee? Wee all come to the word, as to heare the Testament of our heavenly Father; now if a man read his Fathers Will, and find so much given to such an one, and so much to another, and to them particularly by name, and he not so much as named; would any man gratifie himselfe in the forgetfulness of his Father, and would not rather be sorry? Now this is one part of God's people their inheritance, that in the Law and Gospel, God should tell us as it were by name, Thou art the man or woman; then say, we have cause to bless God that he should care for such a soul as mine is, and name me in his Testament.
ment. If a man be invited to another's Table, but the dish I only want, is carved all away from me; would I not be troubled at it? and so, suppose you sit here in the Church, & heare such and such doctrines, carved out to such and such Christians, would not you say, when will something reach me, and fit my purpose: you should desire, oh that God would convince me of something, wherein I have sinned against his greatnesse, and his goodnesse, and be so far from taking it in ill part, as to bleffe God for it; if it be threatening, say, Good is the word of the Lord, say it is a good commandement that strikes downe my lust, a good promise, that binds up my soule in life and peace.

To help us all, if the Minister should forget to be helpfull to us, and not light on us, wisely to apply the word to our owne hearts, every threatening, commandement, and promise, according to our severall conditions, help the Minister to hold the plough, acquaint him with our need, and if not, be sure to mixe the word with faith, Heb. 4.2. Consider of all the sinnes you have committed, you must not beare off the weapon, as the manner of some is, or looke at him that strikes as our enemie, but lay we downe all quarrelling contestation against the word, and stand not fencing against God, but keepe it close to your hearts, till your liveliest corruptions be issued out.

If after application you still finde your hearts stubborne, then lay them close to the word, and call to mind the sins you have committed against the
the great God of Heaven and earth, *Esa 37.28.*
Sleight it not off with saying, God dwells in heaven, and regards not such small matters: Thy chiefest sins thou sayest are but thoughts; let me tell thee, they are in some sort worse than actions; A man commits whoredome it may be but once, but thou in thy thoughts mayest daily, with all the beauties in the Towne. Thus labour to bring your hearts to godly sorrow, that they may be bruised to dust before God.

A C T S 2. 37.
Now when they heard this, &c.

Come now to speake of the subjects of this humiliation: Who were these? They that thus hearing the word, were thus wrought on, and thus wounded by it; that you may know who they were, looke back into the 12. and 13. verses: some of them were amazed at the Apostles prophecyng with new Tongues; they were ignorant, for ignorance is the cause of amazement and admiration; they were never before acquainted with any way to eternall life; yea, these were also mockers, and now to convince these men, the Apostle takes all this paines in this Sermon.

**Doctrine.** The ignorance and scornfulness of carnall hearts doth
doth not, nay, cannot hinder the Lord, from piercing
or pricking of them.

What was in these mens hearts before? Ignorance, they were masked at spirituall doctrine,
yea mocked and scorned the Apostles; so little did they discern the power of the Spirit, as that they
thought it was no more then the spirit of Wine,
and yet this doth not hinder the Lord from piercing
of them. For opening of this Point, take notice of three things.

First, the danger of such a frame of spirit, for ignorance is such a frame of heart, as is not onely
dangerous, but in any mans view and reason, desperat. Esay 27.11. It is a people of no understand-
ing, therefore he that made them, will have no mer-
ey on them; What shall I say in this case, when God
that formed them will shew them no favour? I had almost said, now the Lord be merci-
cfull to them; but then I had spoken contrary to the word: though ignorant men thinke, God that
made them, will save them; yet he himselfe faith,
he will not have mercy on them, how then shall
any man pray for mercy to them? Should we so pray, we should thwart the words of Scripture;
So that, if when these ignorant persons stood a-
mazed at this strange doctrine, should he have
looked downe upon them, and said, because they
are a people of no understanding, therefore I will
shew them no mercy; Where then had all these
poore creatures beene? So Hosiea 4.1. The Lord
hath a controversie with you, because there is no
knowledge of God in the Land: and ver.6. My people
are
are destroyed for lacke of knowledge. Reade also Ephes. 4.18. Alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them; a most fearfull description of ignorant minded men; their understandings are darkened, and what followes upon that, they are disfranchised from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them. Psal. 95.10, 11, 12. Because they have not knowne my wayes, therefore have I sworne in my wrath they shoulde not enter into my rest; a fearfull word indeed. God hath sworne it, and there is no revoking the oath of God; he never sweares upon condition; hee may ordaine a Priesthood of Aaron, by a word of promise, but if they reject the Covenant, he can tell how to turne the house of Aaron out of doores; but if he sweare he hath ordained Christ a Priest for ever, then his Priesthood shall never be shaken; had God onely threatned ignorant people from entring into his rest, they might have hoped upon repentance; had he sworne, within forty dayes, and Ninive shall be destroyed, then a stone had not beene left upon a stone, within forty dayes; but he onely threatned it, and threatenings are many times understood with condition, but in this case, God hath sworne, and that in his deepe displeasure, (and will not repent, Psal. 110. 3,4.) and then this case must needs be very dangerous: and though sometimes you have ignorant men, whom you take to be just wel-meaning men, with whom you might trust untold gold, and they are forward, according to their knowledge, yet notwithstanding, if they be ignorant, for
Sins deadly wound.

for all this, the wrath of God may lie upon them to the utmost. Compare Rom. 10.1,2. He desires their salvation, for they have a zeal of God, though not according to knowledge; but yet see what he saith of these men, 1 Thess. 2.16. They killed the Lord Jesus, their own Prophets, and persecuted us, therefore the wrath of God is come upon them to the uttermost. Now though these men had zeal, yet because their zeal was not guided by saving knowledge, the wrath of God was come upon them to the uttermost; and if God have sworne they shall never enter into his rest, then judge you what a dangerous case these hearers were in; yet notwithstanding even these hearers are they, of whom it is here said, They were pricked in their hearts.

Now see something of the danger of scorning, Prov. 3.34. God gives scorning to scorners, but he gives grace to the humble. Now what is it to scorn? Scorning is the sporting of a man's selfe, with another man's contempt and disgrace; it is not merely speaking dispightfully, but it is such an injury, as makes it selfe sport with the disgrace and misery of another: So the children scorned the Prophet, for in their eyes his baldness was a blemish, 2 Kings 2. latter end, and he cursed them in the name of the Lord, and forty two of them were destroyed presently; see the sin and the punishment together. But now when God saith he scornes the scorners, that he should comfort himselfe in putting disgrace and contempt upon the creature, that is a most fearful condition; He that fits
Sins deadly wound.

Sins in heaven will laugh them to scorn, he will have them in derision, Psal. 2:3,4. He will mock when their calamity comes upon them of a sudden like a whirlwind, Prov. 1:26. He will take pleasure in their confusion, as they have made themselves, pastime with his Ordinances and servants, he will put contempt upon such persons, Prov. 9:12 & Prov. 14:6. If a scorners would learn to be a wiser man, he shall not be able; and therefore in such a case, God is wont to forbid his servants to have any thing to doe with such men: He that rebukes a scorners, gets himselfe a blot, Prov. 9:7,8. As if God would not pity his own servants; as if they should cast pearls before such scornfull spirits, and get blotts to themselves for their labour. They despise and reject me, and think you to doe any good of them by rebuking them? and if God exclude such men, and would not have so much as a wholesome word tendered to them, then let you them alone, God will take a time to scorn them with them. Now if Gods people have no warrant to dispense a word of counsell to them, their condition must needs be dangerous; See the reason of their danger:

First, ignorance shewes you the blindness of their mindes; A man is not more capable of understanding heavenly things, when his minde is blinde, then a blinde man is to judge of colours. And for a scornfull hearer, he is hardened in heart unto proud rebellion against God; such as expresseth itselfe in scornig of every word, and Ordinance of God: But yet notwithstanding in the second
second place, (and you may stand and wonder at it) these ignorant scornfull hearers, even these are prickt in their hearts: God sometimes effectually blesses a call to such, and he will have wilidome to cry unto them, saying, Even yee simple ones and scorners, turn you at my reprofe, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, Prov. 1.22,23. Would you ever think it possible, that when God had sworne that such men should never enter into his rest, that now he should send Solomon to cry unto them to turn unto him; yet see here this word made good, and so Prov.8.5. Ye simple, be of an understanding heart; The Lord Jesus there ues a creating word, Be of an understanding heart; So Acts 26.18. I have sent thee to be a Minister to the Gentiles, to turn them from darknesse to light. For a man to be in the dark, and to have no eyes, is a double misery; yet so is it with any man in the estate of nature: Yet I send thee to give such men light, and to turne them from the power of Satan to God. And scorners are expressly called, Esay 28.14. to 22. Heare you this ye scornfull men; Will God ever call such men, as can tell how to make a scorn and jest of the Devill and hell? He makes use of this, ver.22. Now therefore be ye no more mockers, lest your bonds be made strong. Thus he gives them counsell. And in expresse termes reade two examples of mockers, partly that in the Text, and Acts 3.19. and the very same men when they heard this, were converted, Acts 4.4. And Paul expresseth thus much of himselfe, 1 Tim.1.13. I was once, A scornfull oppressor, one that put scath
and scorn, together upon the people of God, yet I was received to mercy.

How then will this hang together? God sweares he will never shew mercy to such an ignorant scornfull People; and yet that now he should come and beseech them to be reconciled to him?

Answer. For clearing this you are to understand, there is a double kinde of ignorance, and a double kinde of scorning; Some distinguish only between simple, and affected ignorance; but I conceive it is not all affected ignorance that God protests against, for Pro. 1. 22. they loved simplicity, and yet God calls upon them to return unto him, & therefore against such he swears not; but in case they be both simple, and love their ignorance, and yet have means of grace & knowledge offered unto them, & such as are sufficient to convince and persuade them, and yet they will not be convinced & persuaded, but remain obstinate after God hath taken long pains with them, and will not heare, as they Acts 28. 27. When it comes to such a forward obstinate ignorance, when God hath wrestled with them forty yeares, Psal. 95. 10, 11. and they yet stubborn, then let them alone, He that made them, will not save them.

And so there is also a double kind of scorning; The one is a scorning through ignorance; Many a man scornes God and his Word, as Paul scorned the people of God, he scorned he knew not what. Now in such a case, there is a possibility a man should be healed, and such you may admonish, but if after the receiving the knowledge of the truth, a man
man doe willingly scorne the waiies of grace, thereremains no more sacrifice for that mans sin, Heb. 10. 26, 27. When a man knowes this is the way of grace, and these be the servantes of Christ, and yet scorne them, then you may not say, Father forgive them, for they know not what they doe: These men in the text, they scorned they knew not whom; but being convinced, they scorne no more; but now, Men and brethren, &c.

Taken from the prayer of Christ, Luke 23.34. though they mock, and scoffe, and spit upon him, though they made themselves merry with pourring contempt upon him, the Holy One of God, yet faith he, Father forgive them, they know not what they doe; here were many of the common people; (as generally there is at executions) and they put all despight upon him that could be, yet for them he prayed, and he faith, Father, I know thou hearest mee alwaies, John 11.42. and this prayer will alwaies take place in the like subjects.

Taken from the end of his death, His blood was shed, to make atonement, for the ignorance and error of the people, Heb. 9.7. There was sacrifices in the Law, for the errors of ignorance, which is effectuall to heale the people of such sinnes.

Hence it comes to passe, because the word of God is mighty, not onely to give light to the simple, but makes the thing we should see, cleare and evident, Psal. 119.130. and this springs from the former reasons; There is that in the word, which will soften the most hard and scornfull heart,
heart, ver. 23, 28, 29, and to subdue scornfull high thoughts, great and disdainfull, high thoughts, 2 Cor. 10, 4, 5. His word is like to an Iron Mace, to crush them in pieces that stand against it.

Vse 1.

To reprove the Papists of their merit ex congruo; They say when men are converted, they are prepared for it, by some good fore-going works, some merit of congruity, for which God shews them mercy: But what preparation is there in a blind man to see, or in an ignorant man to understand? Here are men as much unprepared for mercy, as ever you knew any, scorned Christ, made themselves merry to pour contempt upon the Apostles gifts, yet came to have pricked hearts: What preparation was there in Paul when he went to Damascus to do mischief? The people of God can tell, when God first looked into their hearts, they were most drowse at such a Sermon, and their hearts more wandering that day than ordinary, and so unfit for mercy in themselves.

Vse 2.

To teach all ignorant scornfull persons to take heed, how you take pleasure in so doing, for the best that can come of it, is to have your soules prickt to the heart for it; but you that have lived long under means of grace, consider what you doe, it is a most fearfull thing to live in an estate of ignorance so many yeares together. I tell you as long as you live in ignorance, and can make jefts of Religion, you cannot say, but for ought you know, God will shew you no mercy, for all this while
while you are without understanding, and God faith, his people are destroyed for want of knowledge, and if that be your portion, are you not in a poor case? you are outlawed from the life of God. Tell not God, that you are not book learned, if you live under means of grace; Gods word gives knowledge, and you have understood the meaning of a good bargain, and of an almes, and yet if a man tell you what an estate you are born in, and likely to die in, you will not understand it; you know how the Lord swears against the people of Israel, after forty years provocation; It is true, God hath limited himself to forty years, he can stay till 60, or 80 years, yet it is much for God to stay 40 years. Flatter not your selves in your ignorance, lest the wrath of God come upon you to the uttermost, it is no dallying with ignorance, no nor with scornfulness. Though we can tell how to jibe at the duties of the profession of Religion, yet take heed of it: if a man can make himself pastime with the honour of God, and the duties of his worship, it will be heavy in the end. The honour of a man is more to him then his goods or life, it is more dishonour to God to vilifie his name, then (if it were possible) to take away his life; therefore scorn not: if God begin once to scorn you, he can tell how to laugh at your destruction; It is not therefore for you to dally with such things, and if any of you have been bold this way, doe so no more.

To all simple, ignorant, and scornfull mockers, if you have not grown forward therein, if so, then
then I would get myself a blot; but I hope if any of you have scorned wife, or children, or brethren, I willingly hope, it was but of ignorance; or else I should think my labour lost, and they that are filthy should be filthy still, and the scornful perish in his scornfulness.

This is therefore to exhort and charge you, that since God may, and doth sometimes, shew mercy to ignorant scornful creatures, now to lay aside your scorning; How long will you scorners delight in scorning, and make it your glory that you can put scorns upon Religion? hath not God stayed for some of you forty or fifty yeares, and will you stay till he swear in his wrath, you shall never enter into his rest? since there may be a possibility of pardon, now yield up your hearts to God. Say to your selves, because I am one of no understanding; therefore the Lord will have no mercy on me; Now Lord, what a poore condition am I then now in? have I scorned others, and doth God say, he will scorn scorners? have I lived here in a congregation where I have been followed with means of grace almost these eighty yeares, and knowes not to this day in what estate my poore soul stands before God? Now take it to heart, and see how you will answer this to God; never rest and sleep in such a condition, lest in the end you be past remedy. You say, suppose we would now turne to God, what would you have us doe?

Solomon gives this counsell, Prov. 2: 1. to 7. First hearken to the word of God, ver. 1. and your soules
Sins deadly wound.

Soul shall live, Epst 55.2,3. Our Saviours hearers fastened their eyes upon him, Luke 4.20. but wonder to see how instead of fastening our eyes upon the Preacher, we can looke every way, as if we came to a Faire or a Market, and mind any thing rather then the word.

Secondly, Apply the word unto your hearts, suffer not your heart to say, such an one was let blood in the right veine to day, but lay your own estate to the word.

Thirdly, Cry after wisdome, ver. 3. that is, pray heartily to God, mourne before him, that thou shouldst be such an ignorant scornful wretch all this while; that thou shouldst live so long, and have so little grace, and all for want of asking; The blind man cryed after our Savionr, Mar. 10. 51. and though the people rebuked him, yet he cryed till he received fight; what though others rebuke you and say, You have knowledge enough, will you be a foole now; but alas, thou art a poore ignorant creature, cry hard that you may receive sight.

Fourthly, Seeke after knowledge as for hidden treasure, ver. 4, 5. make account you doe not seeke for trifles when you seeke for knowledge, but looke at the knowledge of God and his grace as precious things, and reverence the Ordinances. It is irreverence, especially for yong men, to fit with their hats on, when the word is read in the Congregation, Levit. 26. 2. and Psal. 93. 81. And though the Sanctuary and our Churches doe differ, yet when the people are there assem-
bled, then God is greatly to bee reverence,
Ps. 89.7. Come therefore reverently, and secke
for knowledge, as for hidden treasure, secke it in
the fellowship of Gods servants, Prov. 13.20, and
see the works of God, Ps. 107, alt. Scoffe no
more against the Holy one of Israel, Esa. 37.23.
Stand in awe and sin not, Psal. 4.4.

*(Verse 4)*

Of eternall thankfulnesse, to them that are now
called to Gods wayes, who have bee ignorant
and scornfull; let such learne to bleffe the name
of his grace, and patience towards all them yet
uncalled, and bleffe his name that hath found out
a way to heale, and save, and shew mercy to
them.

**Acts 2.27.**

Now when they heard this, &c.

Wee now come to the last Doctrine,
which ariseth by comparing this
verse with verse 23, and repeated
againe in the verse before the text; shewing, that
however Peter had told them, that what was
done against Christ, was done by the foreknow-
ledge and determinate counsell of God; yet that
doeth neither extenuate their sin nor their sorrow,
but rather aggravate both; This was a principall
passage in this Sermon, and may not be left out;
this reflected upon their hearts, to the aggravati-
on,
Sins deadly wound.

on, both of their sin and sorrow, whence observe this note.

That the determinate counsel, providence, and Doct. ult. foreknowledge of God in giving us up unto sinne, doth neither extenuate the baimousness of sinne, nor lessen the godly sorrow of an honest heart, for the committing of it.

It is a truth most evidently springing from this verse, compared with the 23. Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slaine: Whereby he would have them understand, that the counsel and foreknowledge of God did not excuse them from sin in this kind; God by his determinate counsel, and just, and wise hand delivered him; but you tooked him with wicked hands; and now when they heard that God had such an hand in it, it did not extenuate their sin, nor their sorrow, but this wounded them to the very heart, that they so wickedly had crucified him; they took not advantage to excuse themselfes by Peters words, as to say, God had purposed Christ should dye, and in his providence hee let all things concurre to the putting him to death, by delivering him into the hands of secular power; God had ordered every thing that was done, and we can doe neither more nor lesse then serve his providence, therefore what neede we be so troubled about it? No, they doe not thus; But they saw they had tooke him by wicked hands and slaine him, and this pierced them to the heart; and this very point is held out unto us, Acts 4.
25, to 28. God's wise purpose inwardly, and strong hand outwardly, had determined this should be done, that the Rulers took counsel to do against Christ, yet compare it with Psal. 2. 2, 3, 4. from whence it is fetched, and see what the Lord faith, The Lord shall have them in derision, and that is a most fearful full judgement. So that God is the more provoked against the sons of men, when they rise up against him, though they doe no more then he before had determined to be done; See this from some other Scriptures, John 19. 11. As our Saviour's words to Pilate; Thou couldst have no power over me; except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sinne: though neither Judas could betray him, nor the high Priest deliver him, nor Pilate condemn him, except they had power given them from above; yet this excuseeth none of them, but they therefore have the greater sinne, in abusing their authority and opportunity, for a man to take an advantage by God's providence, this aggravates his sinne. It is a notable Scripture, John 12. 39, 40. They could not believe, because he had blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, &c. Why, but may not this excuse them? No; Now have they no cloke for their sin, John 15. 22. An heavy judgement of God now then lies upon them. It is a grievous reproofe the Prophet takes up against the Chaldeans, Esay 47. 6, to 10. These two shall come upon thee in one day, loss of children and widowhood, &c. and yet compare that
Sins deadly wound.

that with *Ier. 25. 9.* The Chaldeans did no more then the Lord said they should doe; *You shall have no pity, no mercy upon them;* So that what the King of Babel did against the people, it was but as a staffe in Gods hand, yet *thou hast laid an heavy yoke upon them,* and *hast not spared neither young nor old.* This God complains of bitterly, as an horrible cruelty, and will take vengeance upon them in like measure, *Psal. 137. 2. last.* So that this no whit the more extenuates mens sins, though they doe no more but execute Gods counsells, yet they are still said to doe it *with wicked hands.* And so also doth it neither extenuate the godly sorrow of an honest heart for these sinnes. These honest hearted hearers have not their sorrow lessened, because they have done no more, but what Gods hand did, yet this pierced their hearts, that they by wicked hands had taken him out of Gods just and wise hand, and had crucified him. So Peter works upon the same occasion, *Acts 3. 17, 18, 19.* *What thing God before had shewed, he hath fulfilled,* &c. And *what use doth he make of that?* Doth he say, *it was Gods will it should be so,* & therefore you need not trouble your selves about it; *no, But repent ye therefore;* because ye have so fulfilled, *what was fore-prophecied,* repent ye, *that is no ground for you to please your selves in this practise,* but repent ye therefore. In such cases as these, you shall heare the servants of God expresse themselves in much brokenesse of heart, *Esay 63. 17, 18.* They doe not please themselves in erring from Gods wayes, because God
God hath hardened their hearts, no, but are therefore the more humble and ashamed of it, that they should provoke God so farre: Mistake me not, I speak not now of controversall points; but it is a Doctrine with one consent universally allowed by Divines both Protestant and Papist.

For further clearing the point, take these Reasons.

Reaf. 1.

Taken from the just desert of wicked men, and godly men to be thus dealt withall, when God gives us up so far to fulfill any of his counsels by our sins; observe it duly. There is a five-fold distemper ordinarily in the sons of men, and I remember no more, which occasioneth God to deliver them up to become the Instruments of evil in his hands; and that is unthankfulness, unfruitfulness, hypocrisy, security, and pride.

You have the two first at large expressed in Rom. 1.21. to 26. when they knew God, speaking of the Gentiles before Christ, they did not glorifie him as God, neither were thankfull, &c. Therefore God gave them up to vile affections; because they did not walk answerably to that light they had, but turned the glory of God into the similitude of a beast that eateth hay, therefore God gave them up to beastly lusts; such as were against nature, things not meet to be named in such assemblies, yea even to a reprobate minde, to a minde that could not discern of palpable and grosse wickednesse: Thus because they were unthankfull and unfruitfull, God in just judgement gave them up to such wickednesse. So Psal. 81.11, 12. They would
Sins deadly wounds.

would have none of me, so I gave them up to their own hearts lusts. See 2 Thess. 2:10,11,12. Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God gave them up to strong delusions. When God sets men ways of righteousness, and gives them the light of his Ordinances, and men love darkness, then God gives them up to strong delusions, that they might believe lies.

In the third place, for hypocrisy, such as turn aside to crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with workers of iniquity. Psal. 135. When a man hath an hypocritical spirit, and looks not straight forward at the glory of God, but hath by-ways of his own, the Lord will take such as it were by the hand, and lead them forth to work iniquity, to wit, they shall have a faire door of providence, and opportunity, set open unto them, and what courses they have a mind to take, they shall have opportunity to embrace them.

And for security and pride, which are the two last, see it in Peter, and in the rest of the Disciples; Peter express'd his pride, when he said, Though all men deny thee, yet will not I. And so they were all secure and sleepy, when they should have prayed. Mat. 26:33,34,40,41. but then were they given up to the most fearfull evils. Thus God left Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 32:25,31. This then is one reason why the counsel and fore-knowledge of God concerning our sins, doth not extenuate our sins, nor ought to extenuate our sorrow. God never gives us up to such sins, but in such cases as you have heard. And is not there then just cause, that
that men should be the more humble, that there is no way for God to doe me good, but by suffering me to fall into such evils, that I may see the fearfull estate I am in.

Reaf. 2. Taken from the holy purity of God, even when he leaves men to most desperate courses, even then he is most holy and pure; it is plainly described in the vision which the holy Angels declared to the Prophet Ezeckiel, 6. 3. What makes them to cry out, Holy, holy, holy, &c? Why, the Prophet was now to be sent about this very businesse we have now in hand, he was to goe to the people, ver. 9, 10, 11 to make their hearts soft, and their ears heavy, lest they should be converted. God is proclaimed to be most holy, when men are most wicked; for God doth not by an Almighty power make the hearts of men hard, nor doth he encline them to sin, he tempts no man to evil; nor puts any habits of wickedness into any mans heart, Psal. 12. last. Psal. 5. 4. But this he doth:

First, he leaves men to themselves, he gives them up to the hardness of their hearts, and that is a just hand of God upon them.

Secondly, he leaves them to Satan, 1 Kings 22. 21, 22. because Ahab would not love Eliahu nor Miahaiah, therefore God justly gave them up to a lying fancy.

Thirdly, sometimes God so farre leaves men to themselves, as onely to propound to them good objects, yet such as he knowes they will make an ill use of, as sometimes his patience and long-suffering, Rom. 2. 4, 5. Eccles. 8. 11. Pharaoh when he saw
Thus God can tell how most holy, though most fearfully, to execute the good pleasure of his will in the sins of men.

Taken from the liberty which is left unto the hearts and wills of men to doe what they doe with pleasure and delight, committing sin with much greediness, Rom. 1.28,32. Eph. 4.18,19. When men are past seeing, and given up to a reprobate sense, then they commit all licentiousness with greediness, yea (which is more than so) when they are left to sin, they grow so ready in it as that they cannot but sin, John 12.39. Therefore could they not believe because God had hardened their hearts; and whence came this? why, first they would not believe, they had winked with their eyes, lest they should see, &c. Acts 28.27. So as that though they could doe no otherwise, yet they did it most freely; when they were unthankfull, unfruitfull, hypocriticall, proud, and secure, it was just with God to leave them to such a spirit of hardness that they could not believe.

To reprove the prophane blasphemoy of such as doe excuse their sins by Gods predestination, and providence, as he in Plautus being examined about his Adultery, Surely (faith he) God compelled me to it, and his will was that I should doe it, it would else never have been done. O wretch! little doe such foules know what wickednesse hath been in their hearts, that hath given God just occasion to give them up to such vile affections, it was not the will of Gods command, for therein he forbids it;
it; indeed thus farre it was his will, as not to hinder it, and to leave a man to himselfe, or to Satan, or to opportunity to do it; It was not the will of God to command or allow, but to permit and to punish by so doing. When David had committed Adultery, God threatened he would give his wives to his son, and how would God give them to him? why, so farre he went in it, as to leave him to Satan, to leave him to fit opportunity, and the wicked counsell of Achitophel, yet this doth not extenuate, but aggravate his sin, for Absalom was then a proud vain-glorious wretch; and when a man is thus wicked, how just is it with God to give him up to such courses? The Apostle answers to this point, Rom.9.19. Thou wilt say, Why doth God complain? who hath resisted his will? he would not vouchsafe an answer to such a question. Alas! you are but poore pot-herds of the earth; What if God will show his wrath, and make his power known? and when men have filled themselves with filthiness, if he give them up to Satan, and suffer them with long patience, and fit them for destruction, despise not thou the patience and wisdom of God; let this therefore repress all such as dare lift up their soules against God in this kinde.

Of much helpfulnesse to all the servants of God, that have any desire to humble their soules before him for their sins. Alas! (will a poore soul say) I have a proud and a stubborn heart, full glad would I be, if I could be humbled for my sins, but what meanes should I use to get my heart kindly humbled
humbled for my sins? Why, here is one notable means: Doe but consider all the great sins you have committed, and if you finde your heart untoward to break for such wickednesse, then let this one meditation take place in your hearts, and you little know what a blessing may come of it; say, Behold all this wickednesse that I have done in Gods fight, it is such as God in justice hath given me up unto: It will lead you by the hand to consider, Hath God forsaken me, and given me up to such base vices? Is it nothing for a Master to set that servant who had wont to serve at his Table, to feed swine? is it not apparent that that servant provoked his Master very deeply? The consideration of this will lead you by the hand, will cause you to think, How came I to be thus left to Satan, and to work so much wickednesse as I have done? In what a desperate, hypocritickall, proud, and carnall case was my heart in at such a time? and God finding my heart in such distempers, no wonder that he should give me up to such sins. The consideration hereof, how would it humble a mans soul in the sight of God? there is no means in the world so effectuall to break the heart of a man kindly, as this is; it was the last means God used with Pharaoh, Exod.9.16,17. I have raised thee up, faith God, to shew my power, and doest thou yet exalt thy self against me? art not thou yet humble, for all this that God hath left thee to such base courses? Then the next thing you heare of him, is the overwhelming of him in the deep Seas, never to rise more.
It is an use of instruction to all the people of God, and to other men, to stand in awe before God, and to fear him, because he is only able not to kill the body, but to cast both body and soul into hell, yea, and I say a greater word than that, fear him that is able to deliver both body and soul into the temptations of the Devil, into such vile and dissolute courses, that it were better for your bodies and souls to be frying in hell, then to fall into such sinfull courses, and yet he himself most pure and innocent in so doing; therefore let this humble us all, before the Lord our God.

Of comfort to all the servants of God, when they finde their hearts humbled in any measure for sin; You say, alas, what comfort can I take in such a case? I have committed wickednesse in the pride and hypocriſie, in the unthankfulness, and unfruitfulness, and security of my heart, and is there any hope of any good to me? Why, though thou didſt it foolishly and rashly, yet a wiser then thou did it by counſell; God had a wise and good end in it, and he will have thee to make a good use of it, if thou belongeſt to him, and therefore though thou must grieve; yet bee not overmuch grieved; It was the counſell of wise Joseph to his brethren, Gen.45.5. Now bee not you grieved that you fold me hither; Why, had they not fold him out of envy? Yes, and he had brought them to be humbled for it, and though they did it wickedly, yet God had a wise and a good hand in it: When once the Disciples attended humility. To this man will I look says God, of even to him that is poor, of a contrite spirit is troDDneth. — my word Isaiah 66.2.
of Christ had beene humbled, and wept for denying and forsaking of Christ, why, then let not your hearts be troubled, for, now that he is crucified, salvation is come to Israel by that means. When we see a Phystitian tempering and giving his Patient deadly poyson, we conceive the Patient hath a very unfound body, whilst there is not other means to heale them; yet the Phystitian knows how to kepe his hand cleane, and to doe the Patient good by it at length, though it make him deadly sick for the while, yet it may bring much found health afterward. So make account, if God give us a cup of humbling, if he suffer us to fall into blindnesse of minde, or hardnesse of heart, or the like, he saw we were in deadly disfemper; and know that he that hath had an hand in all our wickednesse, he knows for what end he did it, to make us more humble, and holy, and gracious for ever after, which if we finde in our selves, we may for ever be comforted.

O how gracious is God to sanctifie the heavy affliccion, and he sent upon us by them to hyme unto the footstool of mercy with language of the Publican saying, God be mercifull to me a sinner. In his own name he raises up the broken hearted sinner, brings him to sit with his saints to worship in his electing love of grace. THE Reader humbly pray God for his Holy Spirit to sanctifie every leaf, truble aross by them to increase every grace of fruit of the holy Spirit which he has given you. By these things we become conformed to Christ.